





# Rally in Washington

Activists demand a new trial for Mumia and the abolition of the death penalty

Nine Bard students arrested, 349 arrested nation-wide

by Michael Chameides

photos by Jon Feinstein

WASHINGTON, D. C. — "Grant a New Trial/Abolish the Death Penalty" was the call Monday morning at 10 a.m., February 28, as nine Bard students from the Student Labor Coalition joined 176 other activists in a mass civil disobedience.

Protestors ranged from 16 to 94 years old and came from around the world to join this historic action. Forty Bard students attended the legal protest as thousands of people came to D.C. to support the civil disobedience, a new trial for Mumia and the end of capital punishment.

The protest began at 9 a.m. Protestors marched and chanted in front of the Supreme Court. There was a large police presence and riot police had erected steel barriers in front of the steps.

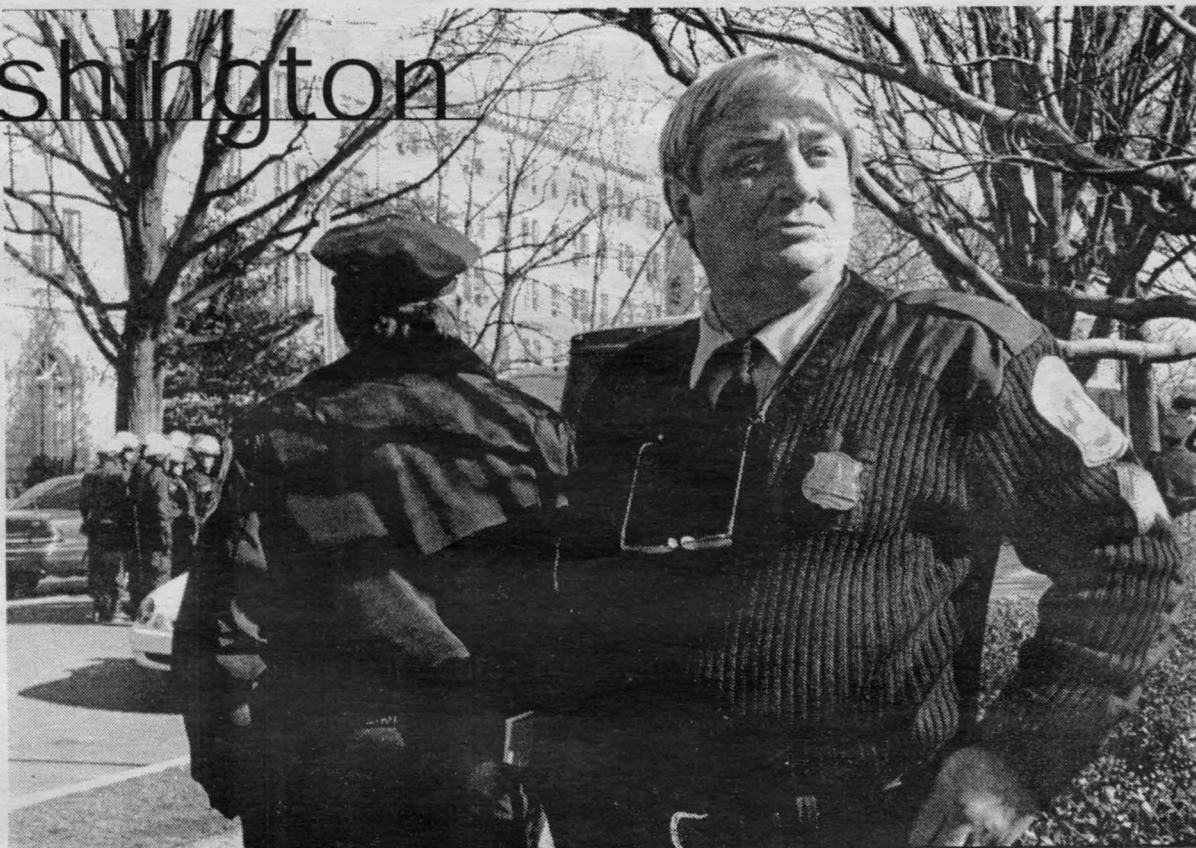
At about 10 a.m. a group of

protestors acted as if they were crossing Capitol Road, in front of the Court house, and instead linked arms and blocked off the intersection. The police moved in and began arresting people.

While the police were clearing these protesters, a small group of about six other protesters, including four Bard students, hopped the steel barriers and "rushed" the Supreme Court building. The protesters went through a police line and ran 40 yards before they were halted by the police, whereupon they sat down and refused to move.

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While the police were dealing with the Bard group, another group of about 14 jumped the barricade and performed a die-in in memorial to all the people who have been killed by the state.



Scenes from the Mall: (above) Two of Washington's finest survey the street; (right, above) Maggie Von Vogt is carried away after participating in the civil disobedience; (right, below) another unidentified demonstrator is arrested.

in memorial to all the people who have been killed by the state. And soon after, a group jumped the fence and paraded a massive banner. The three groups were all handcuffed and dragged away one by one while the crowd watched and yelled from behind the barrier.

In the meantime, several other groups of protesters—including the other five Bard students—had moved on to Capitol Road and joined the original group in blocking the street. Protestors occupied a 150 yard stretch of road by forming seated lines and circular cells. The police got reinforcements and began clearing the groups gradually, untangling people, handcuffing them, and then dragging them off onto buses. It took the police nearly fifteen minutes to disentangle the Bard group.

The five Bard students on the street were charged with "Blocking Streets on Capital Grounds" while the four others were charged with "Unlawful Entry." The students arrested for sitting in the street were detained

with 152 protestors. Because of the mass numbers, the police were forced to use office space on the fourth floor of an INS building as a jail cell. The group was not even split up and spent the day meeting with other regional activists.

The group on the Supreme Court steps, numbering 24, got much harsher treatment and spent the day moving to various jails across the city as the police decided which jurisdiction would prosecute the protestors. They are currently pressing charges against the police because of illegal strip searches.

All Bard students were released around 9 p.m. that night.

After the group was arrested, the legal protest continued and they moved en masse to outside the jail. Many protestors found the experience quite powerful. Ken MacLeish of the Student Labor Coalition says, "The atmosphere was quite tense as the cops carried people away—I personally, and I imagine a lot of other people as well, had never

seen anything like this before. "It was very exciting and empowering to see so many people, especially our friends from Bard, putting their bodies on the line for this issue."

At a simultaneous demonstration in San Francisco, 164 people were arrested for blocking the front entrances of the U.S. Court of Appeals. Angela Davis was among the 164 arrested blocking the front of the Court of appeals. The arrest total for the day was 349 for the two civil disobedience demonstrations. Demonstrations were also slated for Los Angeles, Toronto and other cities in the U.S. and Canada.

Mumia Abu-Jamal is an award winning journalist and his case has gotten international attention after he was charged with murdering a police officer and sentenced to death. Protestors claim that the trial was a sham and evidence was faked.

For example, the bullet in the coroner's report doesn't match Mumia's gun. After the trial, the police admitted changing the

## NEWS COMMENTARY

### Is Bard Awakening to Black History?

FEBRUARY CELEBRATES Black History Month. It is the time when special recognition is given to the accomplishments of African-Americans in history. The question that often comes to mind when contemplating its significance is why? Why just one month? Why February? All of the American achievements, in a collective should be equally recognized and praised every month. Then again this is America.

The old ideology of the African-American as the "other" in larger American society forces the African-American to second class citizenship. It categorizes you accordingly, confines you within that space and redefines the already named definition of what is and what ain't. Black History Month was the direct result of such thought. It was the time when homage was paid to all of Black history; the history that cannot be found in text-books and it was the moment to recognize the numerous accomplishments of the African American mind that have been erased from our history lessons.

Americans have celebrated Black his-

tory annually since 1926. First named "Negro History Week", it was celebrated in the second week of February in honor of the birthdays of Fredrick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln. It was not until 1976 that a month-long celebration was implemented.

Today, Black History Month is still recognized in American culture but how many of us still celebrate it? How many of us look past the McDonalds commercials, the "Roots" marathons, the old black and white portraits of African American heroes, and look into our own minds and prejudices? The internal process is lasting. Not only is it a month to recognize Black history, it is a time to realize that we are history and every day there is new history to be told.

In the recent years, Black History Month at Bard has remained a silent force. It was not until this February that efforts were made to actively celebrate the month. Bard's Black Student Organization along with support from faculty and administration launched their first Black History Month project. The project

began with Black History Month Readings, each Wednesday in Kline. During lunch, a member of BBSO presented a short biography on a famous person in Black History.

In accordance with the idea behind Black History Month, this project attempted to increase the campus awareness of early African-American achievements using the arts as a mechanism. In addition to the readings, weekly showcases of African-American films were shown at the campus center.

Featured films were Spike Lee's *Do The Right Thing*, a film about the hottest day in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn. On the one block that is shared by Blacks and Italians, racial tension explodes in "a blood-boiling 24-hour period that will change their lives forever". *Do The Right Thing* addresses issues such as racism, cultural representation and police brutality. Haile Gerima's *Sankofa*, was also screened. This film speaks from it's meaning in West African dialect, Twi; "Sankofa," go back to your past. In this film a woman is forced to experience slavery through

time-travel. The film serves as a message to African-Americans that the past cannot be ignored for it will always return to haunt you.

Jeremy Paul Kagan's *The Color of Justice* and Charles Burnett's *The Killer of Sheep* were also previewed during the month of February. Saul Williams's *Slam* was also shown as part of the celebration and as a special Black History Month treat, at the end of which, Saul shared his poetry and words of inspiration with the Bard community. Poetry has been an integral part of the Black experience and of course, African-American culture; from African drum songs to hip-hop bass drops, from Shaka to Baraka, Claude McKay to K.R.S 1. February 18 was a cold night but Saul's words (along with massive body heat) warmed the room. This event served as the climax of the Black History Month celebration in terms of the arts.

African-Americans have had a rich history of coming together and celebrating with food. The Black History Month celebration was not complete without the

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# The Chechen Conflict:

*Both Russia and Chechnya Accused of Human Rights Violations*

by **David Gruber**

OVER THE COURSE of the current Russian military action in the southern Republic of Chechnya, numerous instances of infringement on human rights have been reported.

The invasion of Chechnya by Russian Interior and Defense Ministry troops last year was sparked by the incursion into the neighboring Republic of Dagestan by Chechen forces, as well as three explosions in Russian apartment buildings that left over 200 dead. The Russian government, under then President Boris Yeltsin, blamed these bomb attacks on "Chechen terrorists," and shortly afterward Russian forces invaded the previously *de facto* independent Chechen Republic.

Since their significant early gains in the northern areas of the republic, Russian forces have spent the greater part of the last four months besieging the capitol, Grozny, and in slowly eliminating Chechen bases located in the mountainous southern region.

Recently, the Russian military captured the final village-bases of Chechen forces, although several major "field commanders" as well as President Aslan Maskhadov remain at large and have promised a guerilla war against the Russians. Accusations of human rights violations and war crimes have been leveled against both sides in this conflict.

Human Rights Watch, a non-governmental watchdog organization, has documented instances of violations of the Geneva Convention by both parties in the Chechen conflict, reports of which are posted on their website, [www.hrw.org](http://www.hrw.org).

In recent testimony before the United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, HRW Researcher Peter Bouckaert stated that while Moscow's offi-

cial version of events focuses on the elimination of "terrorist" elements in Chechnya, it has been "the Chechen civilians who have borne the brunt of the Russian offensive . . . Since the beginning of the conflict, Russian forces have indiscriminately and disproportionately bombed and shelled civilian objects, causing heavy civilian casualties."

According to Bouckaert, the Russian airforce has engaged in a campaign of carpet-bombing areas in which Chechen forces are suspected to be based, often striking civilians. The Russians have also used "powerful surface-to-surface rockets on numerous occasions, causing death tolls in the hundreds in the Central Market bombing in Grozny and in many smaller towns and villages." HRW also accuses the Russian forces of indiscriminate executions of Chechens in captured villages and towns. In several reports, such as the one released on February 7, HRW interviewers documented the testimony of attack survivors who were able to escape to the neighboring republic of Ingushetia, where some 200,000 Chechen refugees are located.

The reports describe the killing by Russian forces of Chechen men and women who had clearly identified themselves as civilians and who were unarmed. Additionally, on February 25, video footage purchased by a German journalist from Russian journalists was aired which depicted Russian soldiers piling corpses into a mass grave. The corpses in the film are believed to be the bodies of Chechen fighters, and some of the corpses appeared to be mutilated.

The Russian government has stated that the bodies were of Chechens killed in battle, and . . . continued on page 4



coroner's report.

Additionally, many witnesses have said that the police coerced them into claiming they saw Mumia kill a police officer. Mumia's lawyers have recorded 29 constitutional violations in Mumia's original Philadelphia trial and are calling for a new trial in the federal courts.

In recent months, the anti-death penalty movement has made large scale advances. On January 31, Illinois Republican Governor George Ryan instituted a temporary halt to executions in his state after 13 Illinois death row inmates were found innocent. Two weeks later, on

February 10, the Philadelphia City Council joined many other municipalities nationwide in passing a resolution calling for a moratorium on their state's executions. And on February 22, the Judiciary Committee of Pennsylvania's



Senate held hearings on Senate Bill 952, which calls for a two-year moratorium on executions in Pennsylvania.

At present Pennsylvania Federal District judge William Yohn is reviewing Abu Jamal's

petition for habeas corpus to overturn his conviction based on 29 constitutional violations during the initial trial.

## • NEWS IN BRIEF • NEWS IN BRIEF • NEWS IN BRIEF • NEWS IN BRIEF • NEWS IN BRIEF •



### Campus Mice Rally Against Displacement

Bard College has been outdone, by mice. New Cruger is the new home of several Bard students, and at least one mouse that has caused them a real crimp in the neck. Students of the new dorm have reported the mouse chews on toes, dread locks, and food while the students sleep, along with leaving tiny pellets of meals past for aesthetic purposes.

With Bard's general support for life of all kinds, the mice have not been exterminated while students search for ways to humanely trap

and displace the rodents. All attempts thus far have been in vain. Mice have been reported as unwelcome residents of every dorm on campus.

### In-coming First-Years to Be Stored in Trailers

Bard College's current housing disaster, most notably characterized by a pseudo-trailer park housing lucky first-year students, may actually be only a glimpse of what is to come. The Admissions Office is once again expecting a larger than normal freshman class for the fall semester, with no new permanent residences to accommodate them.

Admissions has already determined that the current trailer homes will remain, and it seems as if quite a few more will be needed for next year. Bard does have plans for new permanent housing, but only recently has ground been broken for new Toasters, which have a projected completion set for the spring semester of next year at the earliest.

-John Garrett

## Black history continued . . .

BBSO sponsored faculty and staff dinner. It was an attempt to bridge the social gaps that separate us, and an open forum to discuss the concerns and issues of the African-American community at Bard. Close to 30 spirits, both young and old, joined together over great conversation, Miles Davis and a good old fashion southern meal.

A BBSO celebration is incomplete without a "Point's and Beat's." The poetry reading, originally scheduled for February 25, was held on Friday, March 10. Though it did not happen in the month of February, it was most definitely an addition to the events and concerns that had been addressed throughout Black History Month. It was a dedication to the life of Amadou Diallo, an African immigrant who was shot to death by four New York police officers. The floor was open for all those who wished to read, and though it had a smaller turnout as compared to other

BHM events, it was as enriching and thought-provoking.

Black History Month is more than just a month, it's a movement. A movement to recognize the importance of those who came before us, those who struggled long and hard in the face of heavy opposition, those who paved the way for African-Americans today. It is a time to reflect on the past, evaluate the present and change our future. It is the time for all Americans to begin thinking and talking about our hidden racist ideologies and prejudices, past the month of February. It is the only solution. It would be nice if twenty years from now Black History Month was a part of American history—but that might remain a dubious fantasy. Until then, stay true to yourself and your vision.

Remember the truth shall set you free!

-Dawn Jackson



# Where Will We Eat Now?

*Bruno's goes down, Magdalen's hits the jackpot, and Red Hook becomes mecca for international food*

by **Deirdre Faughey**

IF YOU LIVE ON CAMPUS and only go to Tivoli for drinks on the weekends, you might think of it as a town full of college kids. Bard students seem to be an economic saving grace for businesses such as Pongo Café, Santa Fe, and Stoney Creek—the near shut-down of these establishments over Intercession is a good example. Unfortunately, not all of the businesses in Tivoli do as well as the bars. Up until two weeks ago Bruno's was the only grocery store in Tivoli. Now there are none.

Bruno's was the only place in Tivoli to buy cigarettes, toilet paper, six-packs of beer, or a cup of coffee—seemingly a gold mine for those reasons alone. But something was obviously going wrong at Bruno's in the last few months. Most days they only had one brand of cigarettes, and they were menthols. Desperate "Help Wanted" signs were taped to the front door. Their beer supply was dwindling. Bruno's closed on Sunday, February 27 and, as one cashier said, they fully expected the regular customers to picket and shout outside the front door on Monday morning.

But Monday morning came

and went without a single picket sign. Instead of organizing a demonstration, the regulars simply walked down the street to Magdalen's and switched from Bruno's house blend to the Organic Peruvian Roast. Now if you walk into Magdalen's early any weekday morning you'll see those Bruno's regulars sipping lattes alongside Bard girls and boys who were out late at Pongo the night before.

Laura Coxson works at Magdalen's and says she has definitely noticed that business has picked up since Bruno's closed. "I can't tell if it's the warm weather or Bruno's closing, but I've definitely been a lot busier lately."

Another reason for Magdalen's success might be their unique menu. There aren't too many places in this area where you can get a goat cheese baguette or soba noodles for lunch. They also serve breakfast, which has quickly become the

most popular time of day for the café. The oatmeal is highly recommended, as well as the scramble wrap.

Willia Bepler says she likes the "new-agey" atmosphere of Magdalen's, the great food, and the fact that she can meet her friends there. "This is the only place in Tivoli where I can meet my friends and have a quick cup of coffee with them," she said.



Michael Haggerty

Signs of the Times: Magdalen's in Tivoli and La Mexicana in Red Hook are offering some untraditional fare, at least as far as the Hudson Valley is concerned.

"And it's really good coffee."

Two new businesses opened this month in Red Hook, but unfortunately Red Hook has a similar dynamic to that of Tivoli: one business is picking up while another is slowing down.

La Mexicana, located at 19 West Market Street, is the only store in this area that sells Mexican specialty items, such as molé, chiles poblanos, chilé habenero, green tomatoes, corn tortillas, and Mexican sour cream. Tomasa Gonzales, the owner, is originally from Mexico and has lived in Red Hook for the past nine years. She says that she opened the store two months ago because although you can buy canned Goya beans anywhere, you can't find salsa verde in the IGA or Grand Union. Everything La Mexicana sells is imported from Mexico or San Antonio.

Business is slow, Gonzales says, and one reason

might be because of the store's odd hours. La Mexicana is open every day from 3 p.m. to 9 p.m. because Gonzales also works from 6 a.m. to 2 p.m. as a nursing assistant in a nursing home in Lakeatrin. She's waiting to see if business picks up before she quits her nursing job.

The Golden Wok is a new take out or eat in restaurant in Red Hook, located at 7470 South Broadway. With pictures of the entreés on the wall, posters citing the benefits of green tea, and tables and chairs for the customers, this restaurant is reminiscent of chinese take out places in New York City.

Correander Nylund-Southern had their Lo-mein for lunch last Wednesday and said that it was "good, standard chinese food." Bard kids love it because it's inexpensive and tasty. What a combination! The golden wok is destined for success.

## The regulars simply walked down the street to Magdalen's and switched from Bruno's house blend to Organic Peruvian.



Michael Haggerty

Learning from the Pros: The college recently began distributing the *New York Times*, *USA Today* and the *Poughkeepsie Journal* in dorms for free. On a break from his mind-numbing job as Design Editor, Brian Ackley discovered a cool and refreshing perspective on current events.

## Chechnya continued . . .

investigators from the North Caucasus Military District examined the video, concluded "no crime was committed by the military."

Russia has also been accused of torturing Chechen civilians in its Chernokozovo "filtration" camp, according to a February 27 report by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). The camp was set up to "filter out rebels trying to escape from Chechnya disguised as civilians."

The report documents the results of a survey of prisoners conducted by the U.S.-based Physicians for Human Rights (PHR), who claim that "Chechen civilians had systematically faced summary executions, illegal detention or torture." Camp detainees who had been released "recounted severe beatings and torture by electric shock," according to the BBC.

"One detainee . . . told the group (PHR) he was beaten unconscious four times in one week." Russian government officials have denied the reports of abuses at Chernokozovo.

The Russian forces are not alone in the commission of

human rights abuses. Human Rights Watch, in a January 13 report, documented cases of abuses by Chechen fighters, which included beatings, detention of civilians, and execution of prisoners of war—a violation of the Geneva Convention and a war crime.

Chechen fighters often take positions in areas heavily populated by civilians, and, according to the report, "Chechen civilians, chiefly the village elders, often try to prevent the destruction of their villages by approaching the Russian military and by encouraging Chechen combatants to leave their villages. [HRW] has learned that in at least four villages, Chechen fighters . . . have beaten and threatened civilians who asked the fighters to leave." An HRW interviewee reported that Chechen soldiers under the command of either Khattab or Basayev told him "it was their standard practice to slit the throats of captured Russian soldiers."

Chechen forces are also accused by HRW of firing on Russian planes flying over civilian areas and then leaving,

allowing the civilians to bear the retaliatory attacks thus provoked. Also, Chechen fighters, according to the same interviewee as above, "sometimes deployed anti-aircraft weapons inside villager's backyards, drawing war planes into bombing civilian areas of the village."

Chechen forces have also been reported to attack civilians who attempted to prevent their entry into villages, accusing the civilians of working for pro-Russian forces, then detaining and beating some of those among the resisters.

As of March 6, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson, is expected to conduct a mission to Chechnya. By the invitation of the Russian government, which had previously denied her requests to visit the region, Robinson is scheduled to go in April. She has called for independent investigations into accusations of atrocities in the republic.

According to the Associated Press, Robinson will use her upcoming visit to "push for the rights of [Chechens] to seek redress from Russia," and investigations of instances of rape, looting and torture.



# The Vote Is In

## Committee Issues Report in Favor of Student Voting Rights

by **John Garrett**

COLLEGE STUDENTS in Dutchess County have moved one step closer to obtaining the right to vote. On March 13, a committee of legislators from Dutchess County assembled by Legislative Chairman Bradford Kendall to review petitions of students, professors, administrators and community members submitted their report in favor granting students voting rights.

Although the committee's report does not mean immediate legislative changes to the current student voting situation, nor does it guarantee that changes are to come, the report has become far more influential than it was at the committee's inception. This is due to the recent resignation of William Paroli Sr., formerly Dutchess County's Chairman of the Board of Elections.

Paroli had long been the nemesis of the campaign for student voting rights. As Chairman of the Board of Elections, he alone held the power to grant students the ability to vote, which he consistently declined. Now it is up to Republican legislators in Dutchess County to appoint Paroli's successor, and the report should put the issue of voting rights in a new perspective for whomever that will be.

Joseph Luders, a professor

of American Politics here at Bard, has spoken out for students at the forums put together by the Legislative committee, and been a strong supporter of Student Activists for Voting Equality (SAVE). "It remains to be seen whether Dutchess

County Republican legislators will replace Paroli with a Chairperson in favor of student rights, but this certainly is a good sign," Luders said.

The report issued is roughly four pages and has been unanimously agreed to and signed by the three committee members—Republican Tivoli Mayor Marcus Molinaro (District 30), Dutchess County Democrat Kristen Jemiolo, M.D. (District 4), and Dutchess Republican Legislator Woody N. Klose (District 31), the committee Chairman.

In the report, the "Committee Charge" states, "As a result of a succession of letters of complaint from students at Bard

and Vassar Colleges, Legislative Chair Brad Kendall appointed a three Legislator task force to investigate the validity of the complaints. The basis of the complaints was student perception that the Dutchess County Board of Elections was systematically excluding student voters arbitrarily, capriciously, and without legal

**"The numerous letters of complaint and the persistence on the behalf of concerned students is what brought the committee together and it is the only reason we are finally seeing Dutchess County take action."**

foundation."

Apparently the committee agreed.

"The students need to be given the credit for this. The numerous letters of complaint and the persistence on the behalf of concerned students is what brought the committee together and it is the only reason we are finally seeing Dutchess County take action," commented Luders.

One of the major points of

the report was that the questionnaire Paroli had instituted as a measure to give reasoning to his rejections of student voting applications, should be withdrawn from Dutchess County's process of determining student eligibility. The report stated that the questionnaire asked questions unnecessary to determine a person's

voting qualification, thus invalidating its legal authority.

The report also challenged Paroli's reasoning that students should not be able to vote because their permanent residences are not with their schools, but

with their parents. Instead the report stated that students should only be denied the right to vote in Dutchess County if they did not to relinquish their voting registrations in whatever district they were previously registered to vote in.

The committee published that in a dispute such as this, the county should refer to the basic federal guidelines for voter registration: 1. Is the applicant a citi-

zen of the U.S. and at least 18 years of age? 2. Is the applicant a resident of the community in which he seeks to enroll for a period of 30 days or longer? 3. Is his residence the focus of primary concern?

The report's findings were published to coincide with the conclusion of the committee, which headlines the report, stating "As a society we should encourage every class of citizen to vote and remove every impediment to voting for every class of citizen."

And, in turn, the first recommendation of the report states "The Dutchess County Board of Elections should encourage the use of voting franchise among students."

Ultimately, the report is not the deciding factor for Dutchess County students' right to vote. The decision will still fall into the hands of whoever is appointed as the Chair of the Board of Elections.

But SAVE and students throughout the county have high hopes now that they have the endorsement of a Legislative committee comprised primarily of Republicans, and put together by Republicans. And now that Paroli has resigned, things can only get better for concerned students.

## Transcript of the "Report on Student Voting Questions"

### REPORT ON STUDENT VOTING QUESTIONS

**CONCLUSION:** As a society we should encourage every class of citizen to vote and remove every impediment to voting for every class of citizen.

### COMMITTEE CHARGE

As a result of a succession of letters of complaint from students at Bard and Vassar Colleges, Legislative Chair Brad Kendall appointed a three Legislator task force to investigate the validity of the complaints. The basis of the complaints was student perception that the Dutchess County Board of Elections was systematically excluding student voters arbitrarily, capriciously, and without legal foundation.

### COMMITTEE METHODOLOGY

In preparing this report and accomplishing the work, the committee considered the following:

1. New York State Election Law, especially Section 5-104(2).
2. December 16, 1999, Confidential Legal Material memorandum from Legislative Counsel Anthony M. Quartararo.
3. Remarks and analysis of Arthur Eisenberg, Esq., NYC Civil Liberties Union.
4. Remarks of participants at two public forums.

### COMMITTEE RATIONALE

We agree one of the unique distinguishing marks of an American citizen is the Constitutionally guaranteed right to vote. We feel this is the single most important cornerstone of our democracy. We believe that every American should be encouraged to vote and that limitation of the right to vote should be exercised only in the

most compelling case. In the matter at hand, most of the complaints directed at the voting processes for students in Dutchess County focused on additional proof required of students who sought to enroll and vote in the communities in which they lived/studied/schooled. As part of our work we reviewed the "Supplemental Questionnaire-Registration." The gravamen of the complaints was two-fold:

1. The questions were immediately sent to "students" after the Board of Elections apparently discerned students status by birth date and address.
2. It contained objectionable questions.

We reviewed NYS Election Law Section 5-104(2) in an effort to reconcile the question of "residency." We discussed the memo of counsel. The debate among the members of the committee centered on the difference between the Election Law and opinion of counsel and the federal test as enunciated in the work of Arthur Eisenberg, Esq.

In addition to the readings, the committee participated in two "forums," one at Bard College February 17 and one at Vassar College February 29. The committee stated its goal as a "listener" and received comments and submissions from a variety of participants including professors, students, the clergy, and members of various organizations. None of the forums generated an official record.

After distilling the written and spoken comments, the committee reached the conclusion hereto stated. We unanimously agree that every class of American citizen has a constitutionally protected right to vote and, in fact, that right should be encouraged rather than discouraged.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The Dutchess County Board of Elections should encourage use of the voting franchise among students.
2. The "Supplemental Questionnaire-Registration" should not be used to exclude students and should not be

sent as a matter of course to every apparent student as a prerequisite to enrollment.

3. Notwithstanding the broad latitude afforded the Commissioners of Election by Section 5-104(2), the better course of action would be to adopt the federal guidelines, the three-part test, (1. Is the applicant a citizen of the USA and 18 years of age? 2. Is the applicant a resident of the community in which he seeks to enroll and vote for a period of 30 days or longer? 3. Is his residence the focus of primary concern?)
4. We believe the Questionnaire should be substantially reworked so the only pertinent question is whether the applicant is contemporaneously registered elsewhere. If so, is the applicant willing to terminate that registration. The Board of Elections should facilitate and monitor termination. In addition, the "Questionnaire" should be sent only to those who are registered elsewhere or who have made incomplete or patently deceptive answers on enrollment applications.
5. We believe, as far as students and campuses are concerned, all candidates for public office should be allowed reasonable access to campuses for campaign purposes, and that colleges should encourage political discussion.
6. We believe the Board of Elections, as part of the registration process, should include a lucid explanation of a voters appeal rights and the appeal process itself should be explained with any denial of voter registration.

That is the unanimous report of this committee.

Respectfully submitted,

Woody N. Klose, Esq., Chair  
Mayor Marcus Molinaro  
Kristen Jemiolo, M.D.



# Defending the Defenseless

*Amnesty International hosts a compelling conference on children's rights*

by **Mneesha Gellman**

ON SATURDAY, MARCH 4TH, Amnesty International hosted an eye-opening conference—"No Exceptions: Children's Rights are Human Rights." Coordinated by Rafi Rom and assisted by many student volunteers, the conference was a 9-to-5 burst of harsh and necessary enlightenment.

The Kinder Artists Gallery exhibition caught my attention immediately upon entering Olin. Displayed against the white folding screens were colorful paintings created by children from many different countries afflicted by war. There were illustrations of nightmares and traumatic memories—of being forced out of homes in the middle of the night, with no possessions, and nowhere to go. The intensity of the artwork alone set the tone of the conference.

The student turnout was not grand, although there was a strong presence of faculty and curious community members. Leon Botstein briefly welcomed everyone. He noted the shame that so few people are willing to get out of bed on a Saturday to learn about an issue as important as children's rights.

The keynote speaker of the morning was Susan Kilbourne, a lawyer who works with many activist groups to press the issue of children's rights. Kilbourne discussed "The Convention on the Rights of the Child," a United Nations document that outlines the basic rights of children, such as the right to life, the right to maintain standards, and the right to a voice.

Kilbourne explained the benefits of the document. "Children used to be considered the property of the father. Now they are being considered important social actors." All countries in the United Nations ratified the document in 1990 with the exception of Somalia and the United States. "One out of every five children in the United States lives in poverty," Kilbourne said. The CRC would allow the U.S. to introduce legislation to create social improvement plans directed at children. However, the U.S. will not ratify the document because of the provision barring the execu-

tion of convicted minors.

The panel discussion was introduced by the Bard Center for Environmental Policy director, Joanne Fox-Prezowski. The first panelist to speak was Ian Levine, Amnesty International representative to the United Nations since 1997. His personal crusade is to end the tragic use of child soldiers in war.

There are approximately 300,000 child soldiers in the world today. The most horrific aspect of this violation of children's rights is that "children themselves become perpetrators of violations of human rights."

Dorothy Rozga, the United Nations representative for UNICEF provided statistics: 130 million children do not attend school. 30,500 children die every day. 250 million children age 5 to 14 are laborers in hazardous conditions.

UNICEF has demanded that the U.S. government use 20% of its overseas budget to be spent to meet the basic needs of children. Currently less than 1% is going to this effort.

Laura Lederer spoke about sexual abuse and the trafficking of children, a horrific practice that is not only prevalent in the Middle East, Africa, and Southeast Asia, but in the United States as well. Lederer placed guilt on the demand as well as the reason for the supply.

"It's not just circumstances of poverty that make people sell their children. It's the fact that there is someone to sell their children to," she said.

Third year Bard student Michael Chameides summarized his recent trip to Iraq, specifically talking about the effect of the U.S. led, UN economic sanctions on Iraq. The sanctions came about as a tactic to drive the country's forces out of Kuwait in 1990. However, the price the innocent population of the country is paying is enormous.

Ten years ago the country imported over 70% of its food.

Now there are severe shortages of food and medicine, forcing supplies to be centralized and then rationed out. In 1996, 68% of Iraqi children were suffering from malnutrition, and 700,000 children had died from it, all as a

the carpet owners do."

Ahmed explained how we in the U.S. contribute to the industry by purchasing the Pakistani sweatshop-produced products, although he sees global awareness and education as a more

expressed hatred for members of the opposing side because they had been the source of so much pain for the kids and their families. They did not know why the war was going on, only that the enemy was bad; this prejudice has been ingrained in them.

In

Northern Ireland the British Protestant and Irish Catholic war is still raging. Children describe what it's like having their fathers in jail and how they feel about the high walls separating the religiously

## When asked what he thinks of the people responsible for his now-missing right arm, an eight-year-old Bosnian boy replied, "A shell doesn't have any eyes."

result of the sanctions.

The conference was broken down into smaller workshops, separating the panelists and offering time for intimate discussion. Four other students and myself went to hear the story of Zafaryab Ahmed, a journalist from Pakistan who was charged with treason as a result of investigating the assassination of a ten-year-old labor activist.

The brave agitator was an ex-rug maker and the leader of the child activist group, The Bonded Labor Liberation Front. The rug industry in Pakistan employs over 10 million children. Many of those children have been turned over to the factory owners by their parents in exchange for advanced money that the child must then work off.

Kids often begin working at age four, squatting in front of looms for six 12-hour days per week. They are chained to their looms or beaten if they try to rest or escape. Sexual abuse and rape of the girls by the owners is common.

A Pakistani policeman was videotaped when addressing a concerned mother whose daughter had been gang-raped several times—"We would do something about it, if you paid us more than

effective tool than small boycotts. He pointed to a Bard student across from him and said, "Some child could have made that very shirt you are wearing. His tiny fingers are in there. His pain is in there. His childhood is sewn inside it."

He continued soberly, reflecting on the bitter contents of his experiences. "If the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank would follow the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the world would be a much better place."

However, Ahmed insinuated that they would suffer a profit loss by adhering to higher standards.

The Academy Award-winning documentary film made by Alan and Susan Raymond, *Children in War* was shown after lunch. The movie mixed interviews of children with footage from five different countries torn apart by war.

In Bosnia, kids risk being shot by snipers every time they are sent to fill water buckets from the taps near the street. When asked what he thinks of the people responsible for his now-missing right arm, an 8-year-old Bosnian boy replies, "A shell doesn't have any eyes."

In Palestine and Israel many children who were interviewed

divided communities.

The attack against the Tutsie people of Rwanda by the Hutu was a recent act of brutal genocide in Rwanda. The conflict is far from over. The Hutu have attacked Tutsie men, women and children whenever and with whatever they can.

One Tutsie child showed the camera the deep machete scars on his head, inflicted during the butchering of his entire family. Somehow he miraculously survived the massacre and is now living in an orphanage. Many boys were recruited into the armies of both sides, cleaning guns at age 10 and shooting them by age 14.

After the film, Alan and Susan Raymond commented on their work. Susan said, "the statistic that inspired me to make this film is that 90% of casualties of war are women and children. Not only do children suffer in war, but they are often targeted, politicized and drawn into the conflict and the prejudice."

Alan added, "Even though the war may end, the impact on children keeps going. Trauma doesn't go away with time. The experiences will stay with them for many years."

### • NEWS IN BRIEF • NEWS IN BRIEF •

#### American Symphony Orchestra Gets Big Grant from Ford Foundation

The Ford Foundation recently donated one million dollars jointly to Bard College and the American Symphony Orchestra (ASO) in support of various collaboration projects. With Bard's Performing Arts Center on the horizon, and with president Leon Botstein as the ASO's musical director, plans have been made for integrated performance and education programs between the two organizations.

"We are deeply gratified by this strong endorsement of the work of the [ASO] and the principle of collaboration between educational institutions and presenters of performing arts outside of the commercial realm," said Botstein. The endowment has been established as a challenge grant, in which the ASO has pledged to match the Ford Grant with another two million dollars to be raised over the next three fiscal years.

-John Garrett

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# Rock Document

CD records a cross section of the Bard music scene



Monte Large

by Andy Ryder

NO LONGER FRUSTRATED by the ephemeral nature of live performance, Bard students will soon be able to own their favorite songs by other student musicians on a shiny piece of plastic to be preserved for future listenings. The project will benefit BETTY and the senior class, and is expected to be available by the first week of April. Twenty Bard-based musicians will have their songs immortalized on CD.

Students involved with the recording emphasized the grueling nature of their participation. Mike Morini, who helped record the new live tracks on a 24-track Mackie in the multipurpose room, remembered that "it was a really long process. Bands had to play their songs over and over again. It was confusing, because we were in the booth and they were down there. I think it went well though." Raphi Gottesman, who drummed for both the Electra Complex and

A Veces, as well as providing "pasta pot" for the F.U.C. and handclaps for Big Rock, noted that while recording was brutal, "the rewards reaped are worth all the effort in the world. Having my name on a Bard CD brings tears to my eyes." Chris Canney, who mixed the recording as well as playing guitar for New States and providing vocals and guitar for Progress Hornsby, said that the project was "exhausting—30 hours of recording over two days" but that the result was "a lot of good takes of good bands." Most of the tracks were newly recorded for the project, though some electronic musicians submitted their compositions digitally, and New States submitted a previously recorded song from one of their own CDs. Canney mentioned the diversity represented on the album, pointing out that while about half the musicians on the CD are seniors, many underclass-

men are represented as well. In addition to the expected rock bands, a variety of electronic musicians and acoustic performers appear on the album.

The project was administered by Mary Molina, Leah Proff, Lauren Atlas, and the rest of BETTY, who began planning at the beginning of this semester.

ted material or performed for the recording were included, some submissions had to be cut because of poor sound quality or impractical length. This limitation resulted in the exclusion of classical music, an absence which Molina hopes will be eliminated if the project is continued next year, as a double CD set is a possibility

Ruthie Lafond and Sameer Reddy, American Head, Amazing Grace, Ole Crooked Tooth and the Moose, Dylaina Young, Chocki, Luke Venezia, the Electra Complex, the Steadies, Win For Life, Rachel Jacobs, Folk Underground Collective, Big Rock, A Veces, YoBananaBoY, Mangerine, Malepig and the

"The rewards reaped are worth all the effort in the world. Having my name on a Bard CD brings tears to my eyes."

Auditions for inclusion in the recording were held on March 4 and 5. While the overwhelming majority of students who submit-

for future projects.

The final track listing for the Bard CD includes Nathan Corbin, New States, Jocelyn Spitter,

Malepighian Tubules, and Progress Hornsby.

## To Jack Kerouac: I Am With You In Tribute

POSSESSING AN APPROPRIATELY startling energy, the cast of eight acquiesced into Jack Kerouac oblivion. The wonderful student players brought to life—through the adapted script of most of the writer's entire oeuvre—one rather fabled existence last week. It was done with a meager backdrop and sparse props in their surroundings, with the way they looked and moved on stage, and simply with that marvelous American-French manner in which they uttered the name, "Ti Jean."

"Ti Jean Blues", directed and adapted by Joanne Akalaitis (and starring as one collective Kerouac, Steve Gilpin, Anne Gridley, Youssef Kerkour, Aziza Omar, Corday Rice, Cortney Rice, Anthony Rivera, and William Ruiz) was performed March 4th through 8th in the Avery Arts Center. The first main-stage production of the spring semester by the Bard College Department of Theater, the play was followed each night by "A Poetry Festival", organized on alternating evenings by

Robert Holman, Ann Lauterbach and Leonard Schwartz.

"Ti Jean Blues" is Akalaitis' first production at Bard since becoming director of the theater department here last fall. The title of the play refers to the childhood nickname of Kerouac, a remnant of his French-Canadian upbringing in Massachusetts.

The play was first commissioned some years back by a friend of the five-time Obie Award winner, a former editor of "The Buddhist Review". It was later performed in various workshops at St. Marks Church and at P.S. 122. Its final incarnation was a curious effort; it was thoroughly captivating and yet infuriating, dramatically informative and perplexing, and overall a seamless though sometimes unfulfilled narrative.

As the energy of Akalaitis' adaptation came to a close, one was ushered into the poetry festival, an almost-deadpan, nearly dry, cold academic stream of Beat tributes

and reflections. The two works, play and festival, stood to be considered autonomously.

After the first half, however, as Akalaitis' work ended, one was left hanging in the earnest muck of what was most likely intended to be a separate supporting piece. This was certainly to the chagrin neither of Akalaitis nor of the festival organizers, nor to the poets who read, ever sincerely, after each performance. There was no gradual transition from one to the next because the two simply could not merge into one piece, no matter how Kerouac-esque the second act purposely or inadvertently attempted to be.

The second act stood not as a convenient conclusion, but rather as a more bare, energy-deprived reflection (and again, deprived only in comparison to the first act). It was a response, a return to our unwavering neglect for existence.

The play managed to act as if it were adapting not merely Kerouac's words but

his style; it was at the same time too long and and not long enough. "Ti Jean Blues" is a good play, if not a worthy introduction to Kerouac or the Beat aesthetic. It is almost as if the play sustained too much energy. In trying not to momentarily lag, it changed almost too frantically from dead-on narrative, to exposition. It had simultaneously distracting and engrossing transitional movement, it became far too wavering in its explanation of what is already so much of Kerouac. That was also, however, the play's underlying charm—its ability to transfix while at the same time suppressing any notion of confusion.

One was reminded at every turn, through the performers and their background music, that this is Kerouac as he should be understood, that aesthetic cacophony is but a mere symptom of the Beat vernacular.

-Jibade (Khalil) Huffman



# A Laughing Matter

Indian film maker Mira Nair screens her new film *The Laughing Clubs of India*

by Jehan Moddie

LAUGHTER IS one of the most universal expressions and can simultaneously arise from an infinite array of situations, from joy to disaster. Mira Nair, an Indian film maker of considerable international success, screened her digital video documentary, *The Laughing Clubs of India*, in the Campus Center on March 13. The screening was organized by The Human Rights Project as part of the "Film Series 2000," and explored some of the therapeutic, communal and personal aspects of something we have all been guilty of—laughter.

Guilty? Well, you could laugh at that too.

Mira Nair's famed works include *Salaam Bombay*, *Mississippi Masala* and *Kamasutra*. She was introduced to film when she took production classes with Peter Hutton while working towards her Sociology degree at Harvard University. Since then she has gone on to recontextualize, as a detached outsider, her Indian, yet global background into a unique film form.

Though her work cannot be considered socially inclined but rather leaning towards the commercial, it tends to possess a considerable sensitivity to Indian culture, societies, relationships, tradition and change.

Peter Hutton of the Bard Film

Department, who was present at the well attended screening, spoke casually with me about Mira the next day. He said that she had always struck him as being highly motivated, "go-getting" and intelligent. He told a story of when they were not well acquainted, she approached him after one of his screenings in a museum and said, "Mr. Hutton, we have to work together."

She was already enrolled in his class and this was before the semester had begun. He claimed that he was flattered but replied, "I work alone." She asked him to at least teach her how to use a camera. So they stepped outside, and he showed her how to use a Bolex on a summer Manhattan afternoon.

Most of Mira Nair's work has



Laughing director: Nair lead discussion after the screening of her video.

been on film, though *The Laughing Clubs of India* was shot on digital video. She introduced the video humbly, saying, "This really isn't much, we loved making it, hope you enjoy it, and I'm looking forward to talking with you all about it." The 30 minute video was a combination of 'talking-head' (more accurately, 'laughing-head') documentary,

in this case, burst out laughing.

The participants' feeling towards the movement was one of great respect and confidence. They illustrated the individual and communal positivity born from the simple exercise of laughing together in groups. They expanded upon this feeling and brought attention to the therapeutic—both for self and commu-

collective sense of positivism that such laughing harbors elicits. More importantly, however, she deconstructed the actual act of laughing down to its basic form and explained that when mind and body are connected, the physical execution of something is enough to propel you into the mental state it creates.

You know how it feels to

The video explored the fairly large movement of 'Laughing' clubs in India. It was a curiously captivating and enjoyably bizarre work.

colorful montage, funny juxtapositions and relationships, and serious (though humor had the right to creep in at any given time) interview style dialogue, set within the immense middle class of Bombay.

It explored the birth, progression and present position of a fairly large movement of 'Laughing' clubs in India. This can be considered a technical and formalistic description of the film's content. In real-time viewer perspective, however, the video was a curiously captivating and enjoyably bizarre work.

For the most part, these qualities came from the actual content of what the video was exploring. The camera traversed many of the places and people involved with *The Laughing Club of India*. It captured scenes and images at the numerous early morning laughing sessions, some relaxed and some fairly absurd interviews with participants. Once, even the interviewer, Nair

nity—as well as the progressive nature of this basic human tendency.

It fit accurately within Indian culture, where one fifth of the world's population resides, where hardship and struggle are the norm, yet behind it all lies a deep, time-bound, intrinsic perception on the nature of existence: where one can laugh and face the burden of a billion? Or one step further, just laugh for the sake of laughing?

Mira Nair, being a charismatic, charming person and speaker, in combination with an enthusiastic and rather puzzled Bard audience, made the discussion that followed the video relaxed yet dynamic.

One of the larger issues discussed was about how the whole idea of premeditative group laughter has the ironic effect of being slightly forced or contrived. In response, Nair illustrated how this 'exercise' was not only about the individual, but also involved a

laugh, and can surely identify with its 'contagious' effect in a group situation. Imagine being out in a metropolitan park on the seashore at sunrise, with twenty other people laughing hysterically and making faces. This can make just about anybody laugh.

There is some apparent formalism in the execution of the movement, for example laughing groups chose a laugh leader, who chooses a set of four different types of laughter.

A student wondered what was especially unique about Indian culture that allowed for the birth of a phenomenon like laughing clubs. Nair said that Indians have the ability to face things head on in more constructive way, implying that, as a whole, one of their basic predicaments is that of coping and living simply.

## • POETRY REVIEW •

### Ashbery Poetry Reading Series

by David Janik

THIS SEMESTER'S INSTALLMENT of the John Ashbery Poetry Series has begun with two Friday afternoon readings. The first two readings included Frank André Jamme, Emmanuel Hocquard, and Marcella Durand on March 3, and Jena Osman and John Yau on March 17.

The series started off with a typically enlightening and peculiar introduction by John Ashbery. Before introducing the poets reading on March 3, Ashbery shared an anecdote representative of poetry's status in America today. He told of a man sitting near him at the recent National Book Awards calling out upon the presentation of the award for poetry, "I can't believe people are still interested in poetry," obviously trying to provoke some argument from Ashbery.

Ashbery did not take the bait and, at the reading, said that while the many Americans are bored by or even hate poetry at the same time "if one tenth of half the people in America are interested in poetry that is still more than a million people, and that is far too many."

Ashbery's somewhat unexpected, off-kilter comments have become a

Jon Feinsten



Back at Bard: John Yau was featured at the most recent reading.

special added attraction to the Ashbery Poetry Series. As John Yau said after being introduced on March 17, "He always says the weirdest things about me."

The first reading of the semester featured two French poets, Franck André Jamme and Emmanuel Hocquard, and American poet, Marcella Durand. Frank André Jamme splits his time between Burgundy and

Paris and has published nine books in France. While he is still fairly unknown in America, his work has been applauded by major French writers, Henri Michaux and René Char. His book *Moon Wood* has just been published by the Sévay Press in translation and is available in its entirety online. He read two long poems and Marcella Durand followed each with a translation.

Marcella Durand read her own poems next. She is the Program Director at the Poetry Project at St. Mark's Church in New York and hosted the French poets there. She read a number of recent poems some of which are forthcoming in a variety literary journals and poetry magazines.

Emmanuel Hocquard read last on the program. He is an established French poet who helped found the Orange Export Ltd. group and press in the seventies. The groups activities were important in the revitalization of French poetry in the 1970s and 1980s. He read sonnets from his recent book *A Test of Solitude* which was translated by Rosemarie Waldrop. Bard Professor Joan Retallack stood at the podium with Hocquard present-

(continued on next page)

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INTERNET SERVICES



# Raw Creative Power

Club Art's student-curated exhibition allowed limitless interpretation of theme

by Jack Lewis with Natash Brooks-Sperduti

CLUB ART HUNG this semester's student show in Fisher Monday, March 6th. This student organized, student curated show gives a chance for students from any division to show their art. With few limitations to what student could produce, the show contains work of such raw creative power that it would make anyone proud to be a member of this institution.

In past semesters, shows have been themeless free-for-alls, where students brought in any piece of art they wanted. This semester, Club Art decided to require the incorporation of one of two themes into submissions for the show. The show's two themes, "The Future Never Happened", and "When We Were Good" come together to provoke an artist's pondering into their relationship with time.

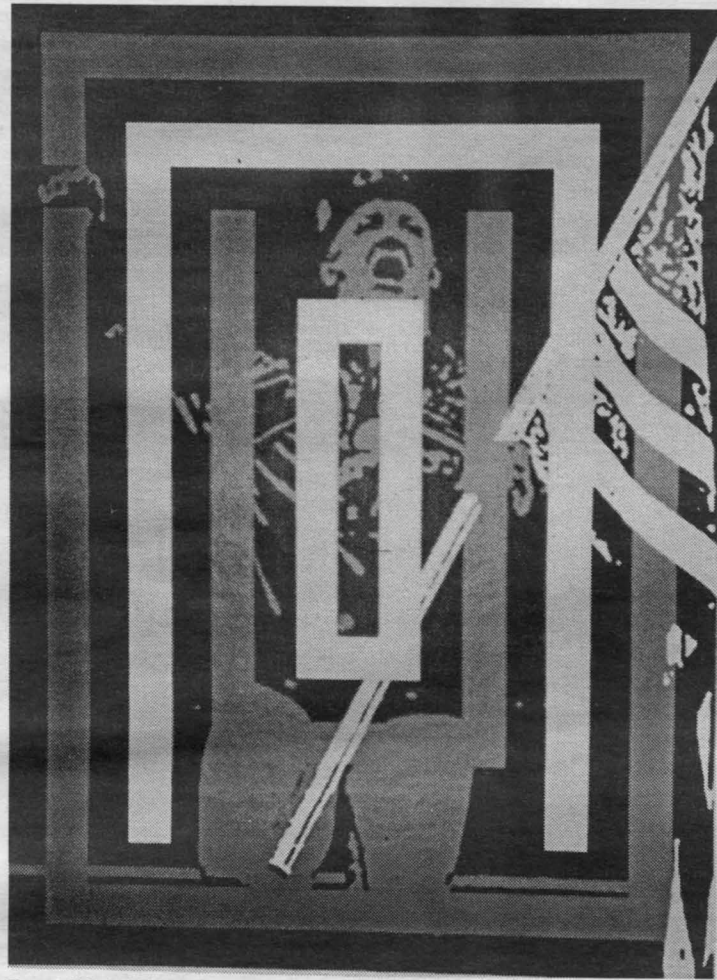
While some students created new work for the show, others had work that could already be used. This particular show is a testament to students ability to rise to the occasion and be unlimited in their creativity when given the opportunity.

Upon entering the impressive front room, a viewer finds an introduction to the theme "The Future Never Happened". To the left, leading up the stair banister are pictures of Twelve Irish writers who ask one another in cartoon-like speech bubbles when the future will happen. The final and oldest writer, Jonathan Swift, remarks that the other writers have missed "it" (meaning the

future). This conversation leads the viewer's eye to the title of the show, Future Never Happened, written in old-style typewriter-letters that look like they're decaying, left over from years ago. The first room contains work inspired by this theme, as do the works in the center space. All the other work around the center space and on any available wall represents work done for the *When We Were Good* theme.

In the front room is Mikhal Bortnik's cybergraphic work "The Ruler's Back." It looks like a digital painting of a shouting man holding an American flag with geometric color grids on top of the image. The bright yellow and deep reds make for a strong, visually arresting work. The man seems to be a revolutionary. It might speak to the fact that the revolution never happened the way it was supposed to happen, thus the future never happened.

There is also Dave Janik's piece entitled "Dialectics; Revolution," which consists of six "kiche" paintings, that look like they were purchased at an old garage sale. They are garage art in plastic frames, but the way he has arranged them on the wall reinvents their purpose and their meaning. Janik has put three up on one side of a corner and three on the facing wall so that the painting's subjects look at each other across the divide. A soldier looks at a dog, a pilgrim looks at another soldier and a dog looks at a farmer woman and vice versa. If the subjects of this



Target U.S.A.: Mikhal Bortnik's image depicts an "American revolutionary."

garage art are stuck looking at the other one, then they can never progress, learn, evolve—especially if a soldier looks to a dog for advice. There is no future when we are stuck seeing each other in vast generalized representations of our own making, staring at another who knows just as little about you as you know about them.

Lianne Won's "Constellation

#2" is an extremely disturbing piece for the *When We Were Good* theme. Part of a three part series called "Constellations, #2" consists of a stuffed bunny rabbit raising out of a ragged piece of synthetic fabric with Holstein print black spots. The bunny, and the center of the rug is painted in what looks like white gesso, giving the piece a solid plaster look, contrasting its soft, ragged drap-

ing edges. The look of the piece evokes emotion. The fabric is ruined, but re-created into art. The mind wants to touch it, even though it already has a good idea how hard the gessoed fabric must feel.

The bunny evokes memories of a toy as the rug becomes a childhood blankie, both are distorted, and are made to be extremely frightening. The semi-transparent nature of the gesso makes the piece seem as if devoid of a color it hardly had in the first place. This could be a comment on parents or another leadership figure such as childhood art teacher, discouraging creativity in a young child who is still a blank slate. By not encouraging an impressionable child, they become as stale and distorted as the bunny and fabric become after they have been gessoed.

Of course the title, "Constellations #2," evokes ideas of childhood dreams as well as their fascinations with outer space. A lot of young children want to be astronauts just to figure out the unexplainable space that they see when they look up at night. The Bunny serves as a sort of neo-constellation that the Greek's may have missed when first naming all the different arrangements of stars.

The show, which comes down today, was full of successful pieces student artists and their community should be proud of.

## Poetry continued . . .

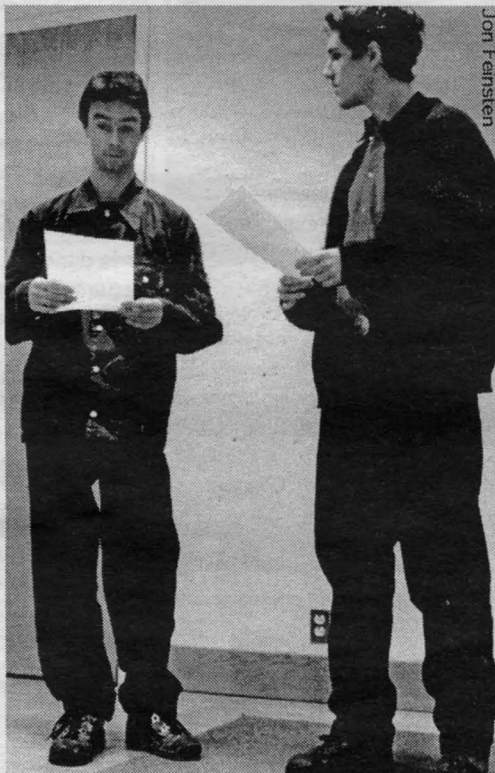
ing the translations after each poem.

The second reading featured two prominent American poets, Jena Osman and John Yau. Osman has written ten books of poetry including *Twelve Parts of Her* and *The Character* for which she won the Barnard New Women Poets prize. She currently teaches at Temple University and co-edits the journal *Chain* with Bard Graduate Julianna Spahr. Osman read some of the more process based poems from *The Character*, including a poem based on the periodic table of the elements, a found poem from transcripts of the Supreme Court, and a poem with footnotes and footnotes to the footnotes. In performing this last poem Osman was joined by Bard student volunteers, Nick Jones and Stuart Krimko who read the footnotes, making the poem resemble a conversation.

Reading next, John Yau returned to Bard and the series, having graduated from the college in 1972 and Having read in the series last May. He has studied with Bard Professors Robert Kelly (as an undergraduate at Bard) and John Ashbery (in the M.F.A. program at Brooklyn College). Yau has published numerous volumes of poetry, art criticism and fiction. His recent books include the collection of short fiction, *My Symptoms*, and the work of criticism, *The United States of Jasper Johns*. Yau read from manuscripts of unpublished poems including two poems from a series in which each word uses a particular vowel (he read the poems that used "e" and "y").

The third reading will be on Friday,

March 24 with British poet Tom Raworth. Raworth has been involved in writing and publishing poetry since the early 1960s. He has run a number of presses, Martix Press, Goliard Press, Turret Books and Cape Goliard, and has been instrumental in publishing American Poets such as Charles Olson, Louis Zukofsky, Robert Creeley, Ron Padgett, John Wieners and Paul Blackburn in England. He has also published his own poetry in over forty books and pamphlets including *The Relationship*, *Landscaping the Future*,



Participating in Poetry: Stu Krimko and Nick Jones at the Friday's reading.

*Meadow, and Clean and Well Lit: Selected Poems 1987-1995.*

American poets Clark Coolidge and Michael Gizzi will continue the series, reading on April 14. Coolidge and Gizzi have recently collaborated on *Lowell Connector: Lines and Shots from Kerouac's Town*. Coolidge is also the author of many books of poetry including long poems, *At Egypt*, *The Crystal Text* and, most recently, *American Ones: Noise and Presentiments*. Gizzi is the editor of the journal *Lingo* and the author of the collections of poetry, *No Both and Too Much Johnson*, among others.

The last reading of the semester will be given by Rosmarie Waldrop and Keith Waldrop. They are two poets who live and work in Providence, RI. The Waldrops run the Burning Deck Press which has published a number of the poets reading in this semester's series. Rosemarie Waldrop writes poetry and prose and translates from French and German. She has published five volumes of poetry and her selected poems, *Another Language* was recently published by Talisman House Press. Keith Waldrop teaches at Brown University and has published his poetry in numerous collections including *Analogies of Escape* and *The Silhouette of the Bridge*.

The John Ashbery Poetry Series readings are at 3:30 p.m. in the Olin 102 Art History room. They are free and open to the public.

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**BASEMENT of the OLD GYM**



# Benefit Concert Disappoints

Rock critic questions the efficacy of Bard Aid's benefit concert

Hannah Adams



A Snoozer?: Tara Jane O'Neil performed last Saturday in the Old Gym at a Bard Aid Benefit.

by Ben Brunner

ON SATURDAY MARCH 4, Bard Aid held a benefit concert for orphans in Bangalore, India. The show featured Tara Jane O'Neil, Basque and Rachel Jacobs. From the moment the first flyers went up, this show had "big disappointment" and "this is not going to raise a lot of money for the orphans" written all over it. With the exception of Rachel, the bands were uninteresting, and relatively unknown by the majority of Bard campus.

Luckily "Bard's own" Rachel Jacobs opened the show. Rachel played an especially good set of emotionally charged acoustic guitar songs. The other performers that night should have been taking notes while Rachel played. They could

have learned a few things.

First, look like you are actually enjoying playing your songs. Rachel is constantly getting better as a performer. Her songs are filled with emotion, and her performance is expressive enough to really captivate the listener. Secondly, engage the crowd in a friendly manner. Of course, it was probably easier for Rachel to be friendly since the majority of the audience consisted of friends who were there specifically to see her; however whether you are playing to a room full of your friends, or a room full of strangers, a band should at least make the effort to be somewhat civil. Had I went to the show under the impression that I was seeing a band like Black

Dice, then audience disrespect would have been eagerly anticipated; but since the show was advertised as "good music" or some other bland description of the evening's content, I expected civility from the evening's performers.

The final lesson was just because you are older than the people you are performing in front of, or just because you have a record out on Touch and Go, that does not make you a better person than the people who are there to see you. Because the two touring bands lacked these qualities, had Rachel not played, this evening would have been a total waste. Rachel frequently plays at Bard, and everybody should try to see her.

Following Rachel, New York duo Basque played. Basque occasionally plays with dance troops. Though Basque were talented musicians, they probably should stay with their dance troops—and as far away from the conventional "show" setting as possible. This band was painful to watch. "Please make it stop," Sophomore Brad Alter pleaded at one point, utterly bored with the repetitive bass driven drive. I'm sure this duo of slap bass and female vocals has a place, but it is definitely not in the old gym.

The shows headliner was Tara Jane O'Neil. Tara Jane is famous for being half of the band Retsin, as well as a member of both Rodan and The Sonora Pine; recently she also put out her first solo record. Tara Jane alternated between playing acoustic and electric guitar, and was accompanied by a friend who played guitar as well. Very few people were there to listen to Tara Jane's set, which seemed to put her in a bad mood.

It is understandable that she was disappointed with the small turnout, but there was no reason for her to manifest that disappointment into arrogance and rudeness directed towards the people who did stay to watch her. Tara Jane played a decent set of guitar based pop songs, but nothing that hasn't been done before. Her set was by no means bad, but it was not very interesting either.

Why Tara Jane O'Neil was chosen to play a money raising benefit show makes very little sense. She does not have the

name recognition as a solo act to headline a show, much less a show where the goal is to have a large turnout. She also did not seem to be at all connected to the cause. In fact, had the students working the door not asked for a donation I would not have known that this show involved anything other than being a boring show.

It is possible that Tara Jane may care about the children of Bangalore. Yet, the show would have been a lot more enjoyable if it involved bands who could speak a bit about the issue, or if the students involved in Bard Aid had spoken between the bands sets. A more active engagement of the crowd to promote helping a good cause is always a positive thing, for it raises more awareness and excitement about the cause and may also encourage others to help the cause in the future.

This show could have been a very great event. One of the biggest problems I had with this show was that the bands that played got paid to perform. Tara Jane O'Neil does deserve to get paid—because she's on tour and, well, she's good. When organizing a show where the goal is to have as much profit at the end of the night as possible, it seems self-defeating to pay a band to play. Bard campus is loaded with bands and performers who would have been wonderful for this event.

Since Bard Aid could obviously not afford a headliner that would attract a good number of students and be somewhat connected with the cause, the show should have been played by Bard bands who would likely have drawn a much bigger crowd and made the concert much more enjoyable overall. Had this show been a strictly "Bard band" show, it could have been a wonderful evening that earned a lot of money for the orphans. That the students organizing the concert decided to give money to fairly mediocre bands, and reduced the money that they could have raised for their cause, is both questionable and unfortunate.

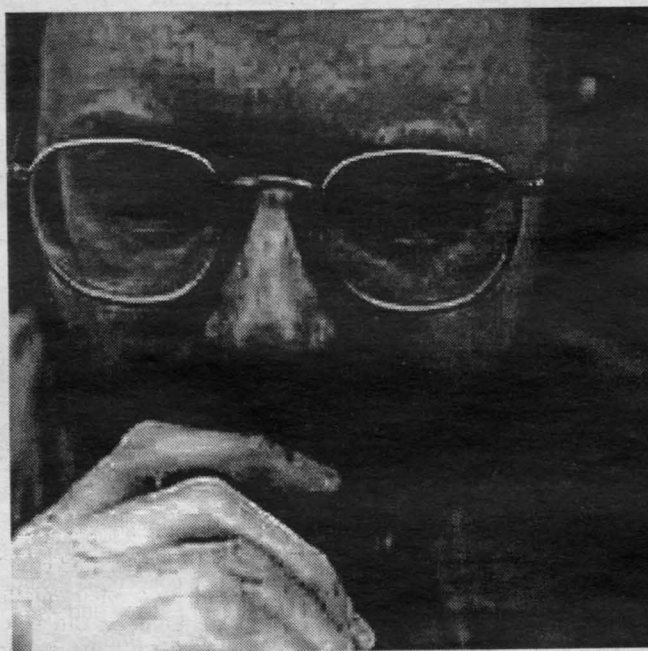
## Where Film and Music Collide

Filmmaker and composer Phill Niblock visited Bard on Saturday, March 4th thanks to the Creative Music Alliance and the Bard Integrated Arts department. Niblock spent the day at Bard, attending a screening of six of his films in the afternoon and performing with Michael Schumaker in the evening.

At 3 p.m., Bard students met Niblock at Preston theatre where they saw six of his films from the late 60s and early 70s. The program was about an hour and a half in length with some variety in the length of each film. One of the films used sped up film techniques and included artistic documentation of a painter creating different works; and another illustrated musician, Sun Ra, performing three live pieces. The filming of Sun Ra eventually morphed into almost unrecognizable close-up shots that utilized the presence and absence of light at

the concert to create visual images. The first film Niblock showed was a piece called "Annie" that, using close-ups and partial body shots, documented the actions and facial expressions of a young woman.

It was an overpowering and unique experience to walk into the multi-purpose room at 7pm that night, where Niblock and Michael Schumaker created a world of musical soundscapes and video projection. Attending the performance was like leaving life behind and



Hmmm: Phill Niblock mesmerizing experience creates an environment of free association.

stepping into an entirely different world; one composed of synthetic

possible interpretations of the installation and a few people

sounds, penetrating frequencies, and films documenting the activities of fishermen and weavers.

The setup of the room was also important in determining the experience one would have during the performance. There were chairs set up all around the room so the viewer could sit facing either screen, towards or away from the music, or along a side wall facing everything. The varied locations of the chairs created many

could be seen moving periodically to get different perspectives of the performance.

First-year student Ben Robling commented, "I liked how free associational it was. Everything from the seating format to the correlation between the film and the music was open to interpretation and control of the viewer."

The performance lasted just over two and a half hours and was met by a fairly large crowd that thinned out progressively throughout the evening. Many commented that they found the performance interesting and that only the volume and length kept them from staying throughout its entirety.

Others, however, did stay until its end, taken over by the mesmerizing, somewhat hypnotic, sounds created by Niblock and Schumaker.

-Melissa Stultz



## Newspapers, objectivity and other inaccuracies

A former editor once said to me, "I don't think there's ever been a real newspaper at Bard." To some extent, I think he was right. The *Observer*, over its 38 year existence, has never really qualified as a newspaper. Partially this is because it has never come out regularly—except for brief stints in the late 60s and mid 80s—for it to be a truly up-to-date publication. Nor have its contents been consistent. There's always that illogical rant of a column or bizarre, make-no-sense art review that disqualifies the *Observer* as a 'traditional newspaper.'

And if there ever did come a time when the *Observer* looked and felt like, say for example, the *New York Times*, it probably wouldn't matter. Just like Bard's curriculum and architecture, the *Observer* gets a make-over every four years. Out with the old, in with the new—but no one really seems to notice.

For a school whose students and faculty aren't all that interested in journalism, I find it a bit ironic that 'newspapers' have recently become the hot topic for Kline conversations. If there 'never was a newspaper at Bard', then there certainly is now. In fact, there's six of them. Now the *New York Times*, *USA Today* and the *Poughkeepsie Journal* are all distributed for free in the Bard dorms. If that's not enough, you've got the *Bard Observer*, the *Outside World* or *Bard's* most recent start-up, the *Free Press*. And if you're still hungry for more . . . there's always on reserve that main-stay of Bard College, the *Gossip Mill*, whose editors have of late been cranking out all sorts of exaggerated misinformation and muckraking, particularly with regards to the *Observer* and the *Free Press*.

So, you're probably wondering what really happened among the staff of the *Observer* and why several of them decided to leave and start their own paper. And you probably want me to tell you. Well . . . There's probably a thousand different versions of 'what happened' floating around out there and any attempt I might make to tell the 'true story' would only add to that mess. And I think it would be inappropriate to reveal the details. I don't think this conflict between individual students has any business being reported on in a school publication. But I do think the community deserves to know at least the nature of the disagreement and what this all means for the *Observer's* future.

For some time, there was discussion among the staff about what 'direction' the paper should go in. Some students felt the *Observer* should strive for hard-edged, 'objective' journalism and a professional veneer. Others felt that the paper might work toward a more critical, 'features' oriented type of writing. The debate really centered around the question, "Is the *Observer* a magazine or a newspaper?" and we spent a considerable amount of time dwelling on trivial matters such as whether the cover of the paper should remain as is or mimic traditional layout and whether we should stay in the basement of Tewksbury or move to the Campus Center, where we could have a more 'public presence.'

Now, this portrayal of the conflict is horribly inadequate and relies on completely reductive terms that don't fully reveal the complexity of our conversations. But, in a way, this is exactly the point: the debate evolved into a set of binary oppositions—newspaper/magazine, professional/amateur—that eventually appeared irreconcilable with each other. The *Observer* become an 'either/or' patient whose treatment couldn't be agreed upon by the doctors. 'Either/or' is a dangerous perspec-

tive to take into the world that ultimately leads to factions. This is what happened with the *Observer*. My teachers tell me this sort of dualistic thought was abandoned when we left behind those dark ages known as 'modernism.' Apparently not though, for we now have either the *Observer* or the *Free Press*.

It was my impression that in the semester's first issue of the *Observer* we accomplished something really great. There were a variety of topics covered and a balance between different kinds of writing styles. I thought everyone's ideas and voices were becoming manifest in our product and that the *Observer* was becoming a truly consensual club.

Apparently not. While it seemed like we had reached a point where all of the divergent 'visions' of the paper were being equally accepted and expressed in the finished product, some students felt like one 'vision' was given precedent over another. Although it appeared as though we had crossed an enormous barrier—that of accepting difference—we had in fact not. I honestly did not expect those editors to leave the *Observer* and I'm saddened by the fact that they felt like they could no longer work with the rest of the staff. At the same time, the need or desire for such a break was never expressed by those who left.

While the question of the *Observer's* 'direction' is a very important one, I think that all of us approached it incorrectly, starting with the dichotomy that was established surrounding the terms 'newspaper' and 'magazine.' In my opinion, this distinction is a completely arbitrary one that doesn't even have that much relevance today—or at least it shouldn't to intelligent people like ourselves. The *Observer* is not going to exclude a 'news' article just because it's not in 'pyramid form'; at the same time, the *Observer* will encourage a writer to follow the rules of traditional journalism when it is appropriate (Don't think we don't know them!).

The *Observer's* goal is to publish well-written pieces, not to bludgeon everything we get with a copy-editing cookie-cutter. There is an art to the rant, just as there is a methodological skill to writing a well-balanced culture piece. It is the job of the *Observer's* editors to work with the writers to produce the best publication we can; but it is also the job of students to realize that a 'first draft' is not enough and that sometimes you really have to struggle with a piece to make it good.

And I'm happy to say that with this issue we had a few writers willing to take on the challenge and rewrite their articles—and their stories are excellent. And as you might also have already noticed, this issue of the *Observer* makes no attempt to confine itself to any one category, but to combine them, both aesthetically and intellectually.

Now this all may sound like a lot of boring journalism speak. This whole 'controversy' might be entirely of no interest to you. "*Observer? Free Press?* Who cares? I just wish the guy next door would stop playing Led Zeppelin 'til four in the morning." Well, if you really don't care, I wish you would for a couple of reasons.

First reason: The *Observer* is funded from the convocation fund. The *Free Press* is allocated their budget from a fund associated with the Dean of First-Year Students Office. It's your money! Of course, all clubs are funded with student tuition and so essentially we're all playing with each other's money. No one's going to go join every club, so . . .

Second reason: Journalism is a tricky business and tends to fail a lot of

the time; people are misrepresented in the press again and again. In a perfect world, 'objectivity' would serve its purpose and the truth would be told every time. But that never happens. The media tends to skew, distort and blow out of proportion all sorts of things, often to the detriment of peoples' lives. While I don't think don't this sort of thing would ever happen at Bard, it's always a possibility when journalism is involved.

I'm not saying that we need to suddenly scrutinize every student publication for inaccuracies and misrepresentations. What I am saying is that students who are thinking about writing for a student publication and those who already do need to be conscious of the problems involved with reporting and representation and realize that journalism is not simply matter of either 'objectivity' or fiction, but a complex practice that needs to be taken very seriously. These 'issues' don't just concern the editors of Bard's various publications, but really affect everyone.

No one on the *Observer's* staff has the right or authority to 'report' on another student; there's no possible way we can correctly represent each other's lives and projects. What the *Observer* can and will do is listen to students, understand what they're saying and work together with them so they can represent themselves.

Also, I'd like it to be very clear that the *Observer* is in no way opposed to two or three or a hundred different publications at Bard. The presence of two 'major' student newspapers can only serve to drive the quality of the publications upwards. The *Observer* will not enter into a competition with the *Free Press* (particularly in terms of advertising). The *Observer* will neither object to students writing for both papers (in fact, this might lead to some interesting writing), nor will we try to 'scoop' the *Free Press*. If there every was a binary opposition between the *Observer* and the *Free Press*, we're annulling it right now.

Still, some of you may be wondering what direction the *Observer* is going in. I honestly cannot say. This semester the *Observer* will strive to come out regularly and to publish interesting and well-written pieces. How vague is that?

If you ever have the time, have a look at the student publication online archive. It will be very evident that the *Observer's* identity really does change every four or so years. The *Observer's* form and content isn't determined by some master plan, but by the ideas of the individuals who commit their time to it, and right now there is a group of very dedicated, very intelligent and very diverse people working on the paper. So the *Observer* is really going in about twelve different directions which all converge at the same point every other Monday.

Newspaper? Magazine? I really don't care so long as it's good. The *Observer* is not going limit its options, but will accept the challenge that difference presents. Objective journalism, serious news analysis, critical reviews and controversial opinions all have their place in the *Observer*, but so does the bizarre, the artsy, the cynical, the et cetera—if you know what I mean. If someone can read an issue of the *Observer* from cover to cover without laughing at least once, then we have truly failed.

So, what really happened?  
I don't know. This is just one version of that story.

-Michael Haggerty

## The Bard Observer Staff Spring 2000

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## Observer Editorial Policy

The *Bard Observer* is one of Bard College's several student-run publications. It is published every two weeks, on the following dates, with six issues planned per semester: February 28, March 20, April 10, April 24, May 8 and May 15.

The *Bard Observer* encourages the submission of art work, photography, responses to editorials and opinion pieces, and letters to the editor and community. It offers free advertising space for student organization events. The deadline for submission is the Thursday prior to the date of publication. Text must be sent on a 3.5" floppy disk in Microsoft Word(c) format (for Macintosh(c) or PC), with accompanying double-spaced hard copy, via campus mail to "The Observer."

Opinions expressed in the Comics or Opinions sections do not necessarily represent those of The *Bard Observer* or its staff. Claims and allegations in these sections are those of the author/s alone. The *Bard Observer* reserves the right to edit for grammar, spelling, and coherency. Anonymous submissions require editorial consultation with author/s after submission. The *Bard Observer* copyright 2000.

## Next Observer . . . ?

The *Observer* staff is going on vacation. Because of the recent changes in the staff, publication of this issue was delayed one week. We will resume our regular publishing schedule the Monday following spring break . . . and hopefully we'll be able to get that last issue out during finals week. Have a nice break!

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Building Bridges Between Us

On March 3, Bard's Black Student Organization sponsored its first Black student, faculty and staff dinner. Professors, students and staff in various areas of the college such as Health Services, Security, Kline, the Dean Of Students Office and Admissions were invited. The attendance was excellent. It was the first event of its kind in a long time, and one, in which the timing could not have been more appropriate. The occasion continued the celebration of Black History and culture beyond the month of February. The organization will make the part if its per semester operations.

The event, which took place in Bard Hall on a Friday evening was cheerful and warm. Previously, there were few events organized by BBSO that targeted faculty and staff. One of goals of the dinner was to bring the Black students, faculty and staff together to provide an opportunity for everyone to meet

the new and spend time with the familiar faces. Another goal of the dinner was to build better communication among the Black people of the Bard Community. In the interest of increasing communication, future functions will also include discussion of concerns, suggestions, and networking.

Our first dinner was mainly social. At the beginning, BBSO president, Tamara Plummer, and myself introduced ourselves and presented some of the goals of the dinner and a prelude of what was to take place at future functions. Afterwards, everyone seated around the table, one by one formally introduced themselves. Some introductions included comments or concerns.

Amidst the concerns expressed was the outrage of the Amadou Daillo case verdict.

Diallo was shot forty-one times last February 1999. He was given a moment of silence at the dinner. However, silence

will not be the ending result of such as a public display of injustice.

BBSO has been doing much in the development of its infrastructure over the span of the school year. The organization has finished its mission statement and is currently working on its constitution. Earlier in the semester, BBSO co-sponsored with the Office of Multicultural Affairs a night of poetry with Saul Williams. The Black student, faculty, and staff dinner is just the beginning of the productive future of the Bard Black Student Organization.

The dinner was catered by Joe's Barbecue in Poughkeepsie and Boston Market located in Kingston, with contributions of dessert from Beverly Bellinger of the college's Counseling Services and Christopher Brown of Kline Commons.

-Vennetta Dent

Happenings this Semester

This semester, B.R.A.V.E. will be sponsoring quite a few campus activities relating to sexual harassment, rape, domestic violence and other associated violence. It is our hope that the community will get involved in these activities and that they will create more awareness on campus.

Starting off with the B.R.A.V.E. movie series is a movie shown that will relate to sexual assault, domestic violence, and other issues. After the showing of the movies, there will be discussions to bring out any feelings the movie raises. The dates for the movies are: March 25, April 15, April 22, April 29, and May 10. The movies will be mostly showing at

7 p.m.

The Clothesline Project will take place on April 15. Please come and read the tee shirts on display and make some of your own.

The Speak Out and Take Back Bard will be on April 26 at 5:00 p.m.

The Speak Out will be held on the lawn outside of Kline. The Take Back Bard march will proceed right after that.

These are only some of the activities that will take place this semester. Keep a look out for flyers, poster, and bulletin boards for more dates.

B.R.A.V.E. is also organizing an exhibit centering on women's and men's issues relating to sexual discrimination, sexual abuse,

sexual assault and/or rape. All artwork will be displayed in Olin Atrium for the entire month of April. We welcome new and old work by members of the Bard Community. The works can be delivered through campus mail to Brook Sweet, or Sarah Shapiro, or they can be delivered to the B.R.A.V.E. office during office hours on Wednesdays 4 to 6 p.m.

For information, call Brook Sweet at 4574, Sarah Shapiro at 4033, or e-mail B.R.A.V.E. at Brave@bard.edu. The deadline is March 26.

The B.R.A.V.E. website is on the works. We will keep you posted on its progress.

-Alisson Garib

Behind the Scenes of the Masculinity Debate

The fundamental question behind the Masculinity Debate was and is, "Is the sex role stereotype of men, or masculinity, a product of societal influence or the product of human instinct?" We've all heard the phrase, "Boys will be boys." But why? Do boys act like boys because of a particular gene? Or because they are expected to, told to, and rewarded when they do?

Obviously one cannot ask this question without implying another question, "Is the sex role stereotype of women, or femininity, a product of societal influence?" We've all heard the phrase "Girls are made of sugar and spice and everything nice." The feminist movement fights to remove cultural labels such as this. Feminists fight for equality between the sexes-women are not sweets to be savored and sucked on. But feminists aren't trying to become equal to the stereotypical male.

On the other hand, society's labeling of men is as wrong as its labeling of women. Men are supposed to be strong, women beautiful. Men are supposed to "take it like a man," women are allowed to cry. If these labels are so wrong then why hasn't there been a huge men's movement also? Women fight for equality and gain rights and privileges. Men fight for equality and lose rights and privileges. Women have proven and are proving that they can be strong and "take it like a man." But how long will it be before men can prove that they are beautiful and can cry. Also this is where most guys I know would stop reading. I mean, "a beautiful man crying" sounds


rather ridiculous. Yet, it is more than men being able to, men need to cry. Both men and women need to cry, but they need to feel attractive, need to feel strong, and need to feel powerful. These needs aren't particular to men or women. They are universal. Men and women lack the freedom to act as masculine or feminine as they want.

We advertised to try and exploit the stereotypes we were dealing with. We've taken a lot of heat for the offensive material therein, but we found them to be effective in creating the atmosphere of a debate we wanted. Do the ends justify the means? I believe so. I think by creating something controversial we got people to think and talk about the issue, not just in the debate, but also in classes, dorms, and in the community. Without exposing people to the issue the problem is left silent and ignored.

Chris Pappas, Bradley Hirsh, Maro Sevastopoulos, Ali Pearson, and myself organized the event. We did it separately from any of the organizations with which we are affiliated. About 25 men were present at the debate. Some men agreed with my argument, some did not. The women who arrived were asked to leave. The reason for keeping the debate "men only" was because men act differently around women and we wanted to have a frank discussion about our masculinity. Please direct any questions or comments to me via e-mail at gj592@bard.edu.

-Greg Johnson

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# Letters to the Community

TABLING IN KLINE ISN'T ALWAYS PEACHES AND GRAVY

I had a really awful day today. I can't wait to graduate and leave a school whose student body prides itself on being liberal and progressive, but is really judgmental and biased. Okay, that is a huge overstatement and generalization because I know a lot of good people here that truly back up what they talk about with action, who try and understand where people are coming from, and who support their peers when they attempt to actually DO something. But on a grand scale, Bard is two things. Apathetic and rigid.

I was tabling in Kline for International Women's Day in support of a scholarship for Afghan women facing gender apartheid in their country. The point was to raise awareness with some articles (from a site run by Afghan women who escaped before the terror began) and then to ask for signatures on a petition which is to be part of a project to have Bard give two full scholarships to Afghan refugees in the states so that they may study and return to their country to end the horrors in a way only they can truly understand.

The point was NOT NOT NOT to encourage the US government to interfere and take over. It was not to throw over Islam and free women from its evil grip. It was to support Afghan women who are miserable and oppressed and need help from their own people in order to overcome the everyday terrors they endure in their home. Unfortunately many students, one in particular, didn't bother to find this out and when I tried to explain it either shut their ears or confronted me with nasty intent and hurled sharp assumption at me.

I was in the middle of a nice chat with a nice guy who had some doubts about the ideology and solution proposed. He was nicely and firmly giving me information I didn't know, but was really glad to be getting when a young woman approached me with a determined look on her face. She began to wonder why a white girl in New York was doing this. She mentioned my own country's oppression towards minorities and towards women and suggested perhaps I concentrate on that. I guess she missed the sign that said "International Women's Day." I think she missed the point too as she further accused me of things like colonization or disrespecting Muslim teaching or trying to interfere with Muslim customs. The list goes on as she paced before the table and basically lashed out at a person she does not know and therefore has no idea what this person, namely me, believes or is trying to accomplish.

It was frustrating to try and hold up my end of the conversation because she wasn't interested in hearing my point of view at all. I feel like even if I had said "okay, you are right," she would have continued her verbal warfare. To her I as a not a person; I was a white girl with an agenda to bring down, to control, or to take over. This could not be farther from truth.

While I certainly do not know everything about Afghanistan or Islam, I do know a lot about human rights and they do not involve beating women for showing ankles, they do not involve inadequate health care, or rape. When I was in Israel a few years ago, I witnessed women totally covered and silent, walking behind the men and looking down and while it was alien to me, I did not consider it my business to end it. I still don't. I cannot comprehend Islam and its laws to the fullest because I am a Jewish American woman. I would never suppose to end the oppression of Islam. That is not my business or my job. But I do suppose to support Afghan women who would like to end the oppression of their sisters and

mothers. I do support educating a needing and wanting population. And that was clear at the table.

The one student was not alone in her disapproval although she managed to confront me with a level of nastiness that was gladly lacking in most. She was not the only one who managed to insult both me and my position without even taking a first glance at the petition or the literature. Many students walked by with self-righteous smirks. Others came over and piled their ideology about US interference and culture and then left, feeling smug and articulate. Still others listened and read and then proceeded to ignore the information and assume that I was a bleeding heart liberal with a "cause," and lectured me on things that were quite irrelevant. I think my personal favorites were the ones who said things like petitions are useless and then looked at me in awe when I asked for other solutions. None, of course. A mouthful of who's who and what's what, but no helpful advice when it comes to taking action.

I was trying to help. I was trying to advocate human rights and women's rights globally on a day set aside to do so. I wasn't trying to insult anyone or suppose that I could change the world with one petition. I used to go to a large state school. Every day there were active campaigns going on to do any variety of things. Some of them I supported and some of them I didn't. But I gave everyone a chance. And I didn't judge them for taking a stand. Here, people looked at me like I had a few more heads than necessary when I called to them to sign a petition. Like I was breaching some code of cool.

The problem with a lot of you is that you have great vocabularies and an excellent theoretical knowledge of politically correct points of views, but you are too afraid to get off your asses and actually do something for once. Many of you have giant chips on your shoulders and try to cut people with your sharp tongues. The world isn't black or white. There are a lot of problems that go deeper than race, ethnicity, and culture. And I just wanted to participate,

as my friend says, "put my little Band-Aid on" an issue that affects my heart deeply and I was willing to sit at a table, raceless and countryless for a day just to try and get some support for a world outside of Bard and its self-important art of avoidance.

If you want to change, sitting in a classroom is only half the battle. Stop being such little nihilists and self-absorbed artistes for a day and step outside. If you don't want to do this, then at least politely ignore the people who are attempting to enforce some sort of change. And before you start yelling and accusing, assuming that the person is a royal ass, try talking to them or reading their literature. Being political is not a goddamn crime!!!

-Alyn Pearson

"FAMILY VALUES"

The President's State of the Union Address began late again this year. As political pundits explained to the television audience that Bill Clinton rarely turns up to any event on time, the cameras lingered on the President's wife and daughter. One

anchorman, after reminding viewers of Hillary's upcoming race to become New York's next Senator, turned his attention to Chelsea. He noted admiringly how the girl who moved into the White House seven years ago had blossomed into an attractive young woman "with all the political talents of her parents". As the nation watched, he predicted a great future in store for young Chelsea.

American politicians' children often follow in their parents' footsteps. George Bush's sons Jeb and George W. govern Florida and Texas, two of the country's four largest states. The brothers held lucrative joint fundraising events before the 1998 governors' elections. 'Dubya' has a good chance of moving into Daddy's old office at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. Commentators disagree on whether his family connections have been his only asset or merely his greatest asset in his bid for the Republican nomination.

While George Jr. had his hands full in South Carolina trying to restart his campaign after a damaging defeat in New Hampshire, his parents were in California, with an eye to the state's crucial primary on Super Tuesday, reminding voters that they were "100 per cent behind this son of ours". Bush spokeswoman Margita Thompson described the former president as a "superstar substitute" brought in to keep local supporters energized until the candidate came to campaign in person. Addressing San Francisco's large Chinese community, Bush Senior declared, "I know the importance of families in Chinatown, and we Bushes are blessed with family".

American political dynasties are nothing new. President John Quincy Adams followed in his father's footsteps when he entered the White House in 1825. William Harrison made an over-lengthy Inaugural Address without a coat on a cold day in 1841; shortly afterwards he died of pneumonia. Years later his grandson, who always wrapped up warm when he went outdoors, held the office of President for

Senate in 1964. He was also on his father's team during the 1992 presidential race, and it is said that the Bush's Campaign 2000 is deeply motivated by a desire to avenge his father's defeat.

Marriages have forged powerful alliances throughout history, and American politics is no exception. Hillary Clinton easily became the Democrats' candidate to replace Daniel Patrick Moynihan as Senator for New York, her main qualification being that she is married to the President. Elizabeth Dole was for some time considered a serious contender for the Republican Presidential nomination, seeking to succeed where her husband failed in 1996. Her name has frequently been mentioned as a possible running mate for George Bush, bringing a wealth of family experience to the Republican campaign—there has been a Bush or a Dole on every ticket since 1976.

The dynastic dimension of American politics is easy to describe, harder to explain. No other western democracy is so dominated by politicians related to each other by blood or marriage. In a country whose founding fathers fought to free themselves from hereditary rulers, in a culture which glorifies the self-made man, why do candidates with powerful family backing win so many elections?

The answer lies, in part, in brand name recognition. When Americans hear the name Bush, they have a model of a civilized, patrician leader, of conservatism (compassionate or otherwise). Electing Al Gore Junior as their Senator in 1985 was not a difficult decision for the voters of Tennessee, many of whom had voted Al Gore Senior into the same office a generation earlier. Many voters are resistant to out-of-state outsiders running for office—viz the condemnation of Hillary Clinton as a 'carpetbagger' in New York's Senate race—and those voters tend to prefer favorite sons like George W. Bush.

Connections on Capitol Hill are as important for ambitious politicians as credi-

bility with the electorate. George Bush was anointed the G.O.P.'s 'establishment candidate' long before the primary season began, when he gained the support of a clear majority of Republican sen-

ators and state governors. His family's awesome network of party officials and financial backers made sure of that. Americans who inherit wealth are less respected than those who make their own fortune; in contrast, political power is all the stronger when it is inherited.

American Presidents have always fitted into a rigid template. The only candidates who have ever survived the primary elections have been white men. Typically they are Protestants of British ancestry—in a nation full of Changs, Cohens and Gomezs, the White House has recently been inhabited by men with names like Johnson, Carter and Bush. Would be presidents are expected to resemble previous presidents, and on that score George Bush is a clear winner, though Al Gore will run him close. Whoever wins, the new President's Inaugural Address will probably include a tribute to the President's father, who provided such an inspirational example for his son to follow.

-Mathew Richards

The dynastic dimension of American politics is easy to describe, harder to explain. No other western democracy is so dominated by politicians related to each other by blood or marriage.

rather longer. In the twentieth century the Kennedys virtually became America's royal family, with the death of John F. Kennedy Jr compared to the loss of Princess Diana. Today Bush, Clinton, Gore, and Dole are all surnames to watch.

Andrew Cuomo is a classic second-generation politician. In his twenties he played a leading role in his father's successful campaign to be elected Governor of New York. After practicing law for a few years he entered top-level politics, and was appointed Housing Secretary by Bill Clinton in 1993. On his way up he married a Kennedy, uniting the old aristocracy of the Democrat Party with a new, upcoming family.

The careers of other Americans born into politics follow the same pattern as Cuomo's. Over a third of U.S. Congressmen trained as lawyers. Karenna Gore is an influential member of her father's campaign team, whose responsibilities include teaching her father Spanish in an effort to woo Hispanic voters. George W. Bush got his first taste of electoral action helping out in his father's unsuccessful bid for the



Kick 'Em In The Balls:  
It's Intramural Soccer!

Mike Morini



Jump Ball!: Rafi Gottesman (above) rests after an excruciating match; Jed Clark (below) has a vertical leap of 57 inches!

Intramural Indoor Soccer kicked off its 2000 season in late February. The players are divided into two divisions, A and B, with five teams in each. The playoffs, which take place during the third week in March, will decide which teams will get to represent their respective Divisions and play each other in the Finals.

Intramural soccer offers a low key, stress free alternative to playing a team sport and devoting hours each week to practices, games, and physical exertion. It is 'Soccer Lite', in the best possible sense. For some of us who may lack coordination, motor skills, and time, for some of us, who have never had rock-hard calves, here is a chance to leave the bench behind and get in the game. However, intramural sports are by no means a haven for the kids who always got picked last for teams in grade school. The games often become heated and fierce, and there is no lack of talented and capable players on every team, even though the number of varsity players allowed on the field is specifically limited by the rules to three at a time. Although the point of these games is to give Bard students a chance to play against their fellow Bard students, spectators are still greatly appreciated and add to the spirit and enthusiasm of all involved. There is a schedule of game times on the Intramural bulletin board in the balcony hallway of the gym. Feel free to attend!

-Molly Schoemann

J.B. Players Search  
for Identity

Mike Morini first decided to start the Snowball fight club as a joke to see how much money he could get out of the budget forum. Mike then canned that idea thinking that, "Hey, maybe people might actually want to do this."

"I didn't actually want to have a snowball fight club open to the public of Bard College, because there might have actually been people interested who can throw hard and hurt me."

During this whole process Mike played a little pickup basketball with some friends and listened to some good old James Brown and realized that there might be a better, more convincing way to get money. So he then decided with co-founder Frank Musarra—who Mike would like to add has not attended the last six meetings, you ass—that he would

change the Snowball fight club to the Snowball Fight Club/James Brown Memorial Intramural Basketball Club.

They thought that the concept of a snowball fight club was so ludicrous that they had to keep it in the name even though they had no intentions of ever throwing a snowball.

Frank and Mike then decided that they would go to this "Budget Forum" interview thing and thought that it "went very well" overall. But the members of the forum apparently thought otherwise. Frank and Mike were given one dollar.

Mike then had to go to the actual Budget Forum, at which he had a won-

derful time overlooking the effects of alcohol on one-sided thinking people. When it was Mike's turn to defend his budget they threw snowballs at him.

"I saw the snowballs before they were thrown, so I was given enough time to think of revenge. When all of the snowballs were thrown I ran up to the forum and jumped on top of them putting snowballs down their shirts and giving them noogies. I had my revenge and I received 18 dollars for it," Mike said.

Now the James Brown Memorial Intramural Basketball Club meets weekly usually for one or two hours or until the majority of the players have overheated. Many different students participate from week to week bringing stiff competition to the unskilled hoopsters.

Jed Clarke is the best player out there. If you would like to challenge him to a good one-on-one match-up call his secretary at x4080.

-Mike Morini

Mike Morini



The Listings

*Due to logistics and last-minute organization, this issue's list is limited to events that were already posted elsewhere. We'd like to see this become a comprehensive, inclusive, forum for advertising events that are of interest to the Bard community. In the future, please alert us to anything happening, on or off campus, that you'd like to see publicized. If possible, avoid sending news of weekly meetings or other regular gatherings. Thank you. (Email sr574@bard.edu)*

Monday, March 20 – "Great American Meatout"

**Death in Venice (1971)** – Lit/Gender Studies 277 will show Luchino Visconti's film adaptation of Thomas Mann's classic work. Campus Center Theater, 5:00 pm.

**Spring Dance Theatre** – A showcase of student choreography, presented by the Department of Dance. Free; reservations not required. Bad coffee at intermission. For info call 758-8622. Dance Studio, Avery Arts Center, 8:00 pm.

**A Personal Account of Domestic Violence** – Women's Alliance presents a talk given by Linda. Olin 101, 8:00.

**Human Rights Film Series 2000** – *Hillbrow Kids*, directed by Michael Hammon and Jacqueline Goergen. Campus Center Theater, 8:00.

**Collier Shaw** – Photographer/artist will talk and show work. Olin 102, 8:30 pm.

Tuesday, March 21

**A Theatre Town Meeting** – called by the Theatre Department. All theatre majors and potentials must attend; anyone else interested is encouraged to come. Scene Shop Theater, 6:30 pm.

**Dee Callan** – will speak on Relationship Violence in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Communities; presented by BRAVE. Olin 203, 7:00.

Wednesday, March 22

**Elisabeth Semel** – Bard alumnae and Director of American Bar Association Death Penalty Project will talk on "The US Death Penalty: The Whole World is Watching."

Olin 102, 4:30 pm.

Thursday, March 23

**Lenten Lectures Series** – Rev. Dr. Bruce Chilton will talk on Jesus in Capernaum (part of a larger topic on "Rabbi Jesus: Career and Death"). Lunch precedes the lecture, for which a \$5 donation is requested. Otherwise free and open to the public. Call 758-7279 for reservations (necessary). Lunch is in Bard Hall at 12 noon.

**Meet the artists** – who are participating in an exhibition of artists' books made in Bernald Greenwald's intercession course at the Rhinebeck Public Library. It is the last day of the exhibition. A van will leave from the Fischer parking lot, 4:45 pm.

**Bassist Peter Kowald** – plays Solos and Duos. Look out for signs.

**Stan Brakhage** – will show his new film and receive an honorary degree.

**Fes the Digereedo Man** – presented by the mysterious BETTY. Campus Center Café, 9:00 pm.

**Purim Party!** – Probably in the Olde Gym. Look out for flyers.

Friday, March 24

**John Ashbery Poetry Series continues** – Tom Raworth will read from his work. Olin 102, 3:30 pm.

**"Ruckus"** at Bard begins – a weekend-long gathering of activists from area schools to discuss and prepare for the upcoming demonstration (April 16) against the IMF's meeting in Washington DC. Look out for signs.

**Rock Show with Bard Bands** – A Veces, Uptherepublic (formerly Big Rock), F.U.C., a DJ and surprises. Big Rock is the editor's favorite band in the world. Refreshments. Olde Gym basement—come early, stay late.

**Biodevastation begins** – a weekend-long demonstration against genetic engineering in Boston. Culminating on Sunday with a protest and parade, with teach-ins on Fri. and Sat. Contact Jim or Raisa at x4720 for info.

Saturday, March 25

**Brave Movie Series** – film TBA. Campus Center Theater,



Michael Haggerty

Warning, Falling Debris: Cranes have been appearing in different parts of campus all semester. This crane would unfortunately give no comment as to its business in front of Olin.

7:00.

**The Song of Freedom** – a documentary on the creation of Bangladesh, brought by the ISO. Campus Center Theater, 10:30 pm.

**"Ruckus" party** – in the olde gym. Bands, djs, etc.

Sunday, March 26

**Academy Awards Night** – BETTY's at it again. Campus Center Theater, 5:00 pm.

Wednesday, March 29

**Marina Van Zuylen** – as part of the Faculty Seminar Series, (are we invited? no one really knows...) will talk on "The Madwoman and the Doctor: Aesthetic Redemption in Baudelaire's Parisian Spleen", Olin 102, 7:00.

**Richard Buckner** – everybody's favorite folk-man brings down the Olde Gym around 9:00.

Thursday, March 30

**Miranda July** – Performance and video artist, in the Campus Center Theater, 6:00.


**James Benning** – the filmmaker will show work. Preston Theater, 8:30.

**Les Savy Fav with Love is Laughter** – Rock music in the Olde Gym. Nighttime; come early for style tips.




The Dancing Paperclip of Tormented Souls by Morgan Pielli

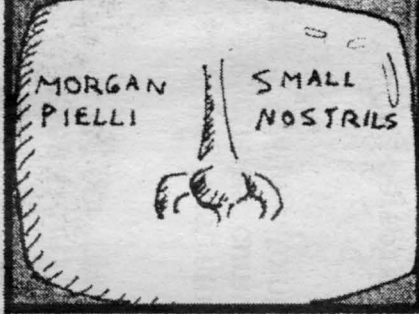
The elections are almost upon us. And it is left up to the nation's cartoonists to make light of the results. The time has come for you to ask yourself: "Am I satisfied with the way Morgan Pielli has upheld the office of Contributing Cartoonist?"




While occupying the office of Contributing Cartoonist, Morgan Pielli did nothing to stop a herd of angry goats that made off with three hundred dollars worth of the taxpayers assorted ball bearings.



Morgan Pielli has claimed to be able to put as many as seven pencils and a magic marked up his nose, when in reality, he can only manage one Blistex container per nostril.




When asked about his religious views, Morgan Pielli is quoted as saying that, when we die, our souls become "refreshingly minty." Ask yourself: is this the kind of cartoonist you want lampooning your political figures?



©2000 Morgan Pielli


Mr. Schooshyface Versus His Evil Goatee by David Warth

HAPPY HAPPY




AA!  
AA!

I am the devil!



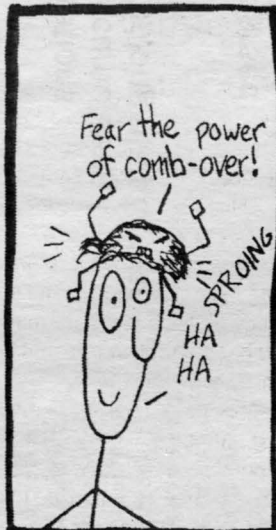
DAVE WARTH 2000

I am evil!  
None shall be spared!



Fear the power of comb-over!

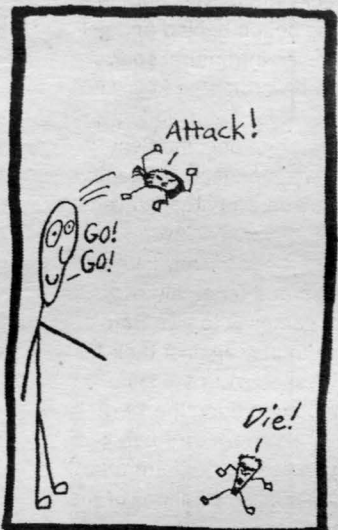
HA HA



Attack!

Go! Go!

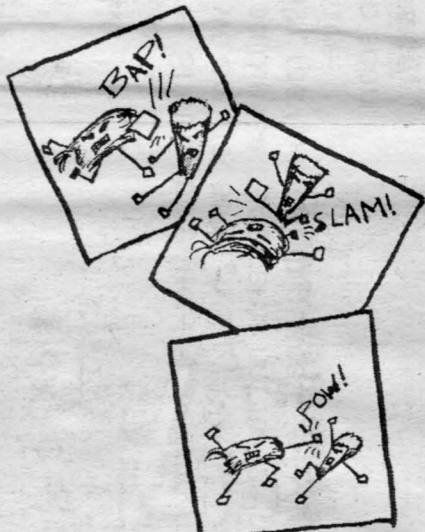
Die!



BAP!

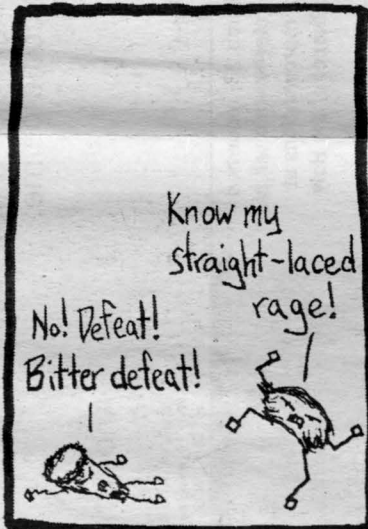
SLAM!

POW!



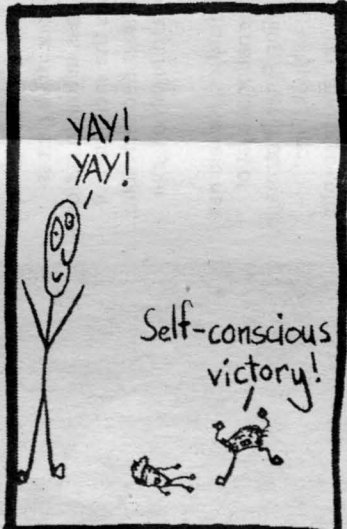
No! Defeat!  
Bitter defeat!

Know my straight-laced rage!



YAY!  
YAY!

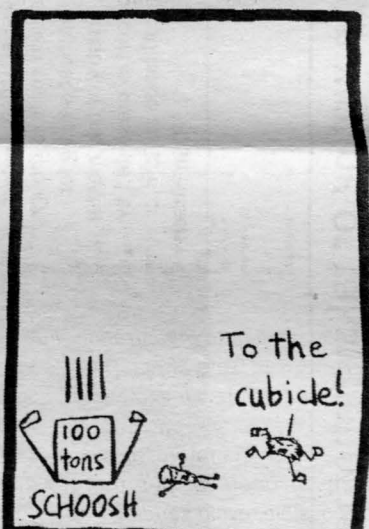
Self-conscious victory!



To the cubicle!

100 tons

SCHOOSH



The Original and Best. ©2000 David Warth

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STARRING JOHNNY EFFIGY



Driving nails into a stick of frozen butter isn't quite so much fun as one would think.

©2000 Ryan Wheeler

by Ryan Wheeler



# Two Poems in Memory of Amadou Diallo

2 Fronts:

I was scared strait today tickled pink in tulips  
 photosynthesized by barbed wire fences  
 exclusive  
 exclusion,  
 pistiled stamens and pistol whipped companions-  
 Phenotypes: cataclysms trigger fingered orgasms of ignorance,  
 misunderstanding syndrome miseducation dome  
 fierce in maximum circumstance minimum second chance  
 as third eyes stigmatize soul stance-  
 Where have you been she? Where do you be when glocks  
 represent the counter productive counterpart  
 she saw  
 he she  
 where do you be? scared squared strait  
 in denominators as logarithms log our rhythms  
 denominate  
 Ex factors generate-  
 These are the generations holding frustrated frustrations  
 visit visitors in sunlight stratospheres cumulous accumulating  
 fences fenced in penned up... waiting...thinking...thinking about... wait-  
 ing...  
 for...  
 lifetimes destructed built aspiring perspiration dispersed  
 left to search,  
 Crawl beneath the cells...Membranes of change...  
 Dismembered minds of spastic plasma,  
 Jellylike numerators left unfactored.

-Hillary Washington

It Could Be Me

It could be me. Shot by blue fire. Ice. Fear in my eyes.  
 Even at play we are not safe.  
 Blue fires should ease our streets not freeze our hearts.  
 Amadou Diallo, may he rest in peace.  
 Shot by blue fire.  
 Life taken too soon.  
 His spirit lives on.  
 We fight to extinguish a new fire.  
 Next time it could be me.

-Anonymous

This Thursday, March 23, renowned German bassist Peter Kowald will play a concert of solo improvisations at 8:00 p.m. in the Chapel of the Holy Innocents.

Kowald, who was a central figure in the development of European Free Improvisation, is in the midst of a three month American tour, driving cross-country with his bass in tow. In performance, he combines the vocabulary of Jazz with modern extended technique, creating complex and highly original structures.

Since the mid-sixties, Kowald has played with an international cast of improvisers, including Peter Brotzmann, Leo Smith, Marilyn Crispell, Fred Anderson, Evan Parker, and many others. In addition, he has collaborated extensively with visual artists, writers, and dancers. The solo context, though, is quite possibly the best setting for appreciating the artistry of this master musician. The concert is presented by the Creative Music Alliance at Bard.

-Dan Hirsch



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Use the new listings page. Promote your event, announce your party. Submit listings to sr574@bard.edu.

Interested in writing or taking photos for the *Observer*? Give us a call at X7131 or drop an email to observer@bard.edu.